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# CANDLE-LIGHTIN' TIME



PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR





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Candle-Lightin'

Time

by

Paul Laurence  
Dunbar



Illustrated with Photographs  
by the  
Hampton Institute  
Camera Club  
and decorations by  
Margaret Armstrong



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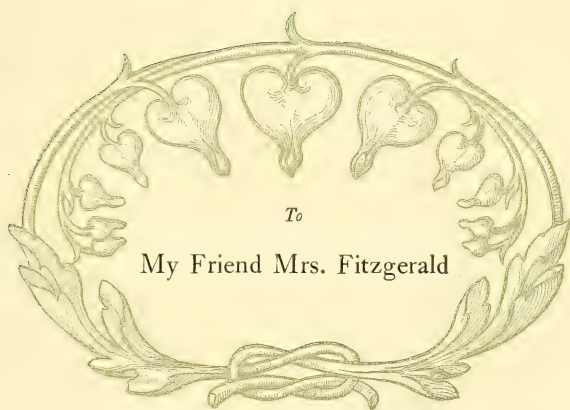
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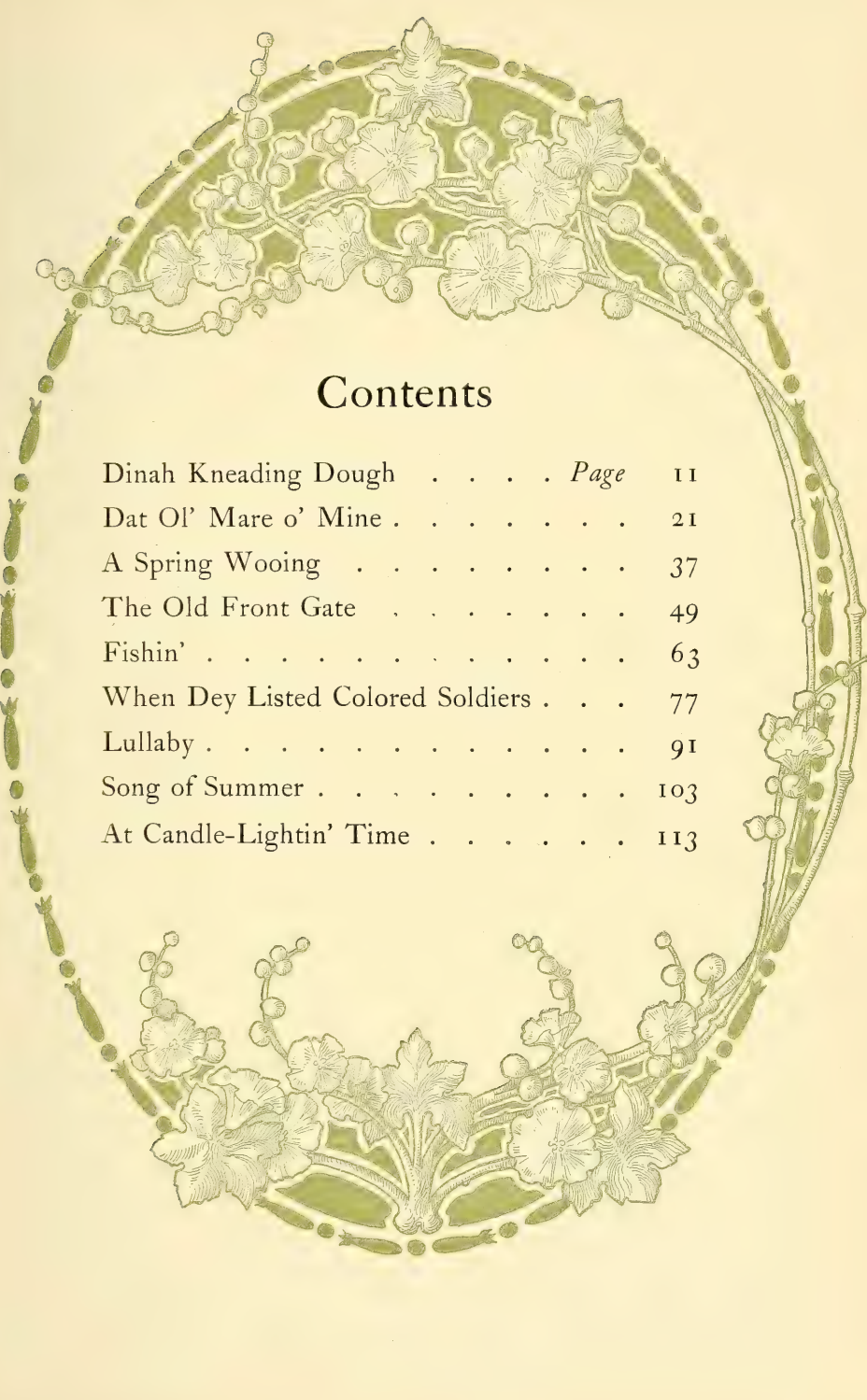
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## Contents

Dinah Kneading Dough . . . . .	<i>Page</i>	11
Dat Ol' Mare o' Mine . . . . .		21
A Spring Wooing . . . . .		37
The Old Front Gate . . . . .		49
Fishin' . . . . .		63
When Dey Listed Colored Soldiers . . . .		77
Lullaby . . . . .		91
Song of Summer . . . . .		103
At Candle-Lightin' Time . . . . .		113





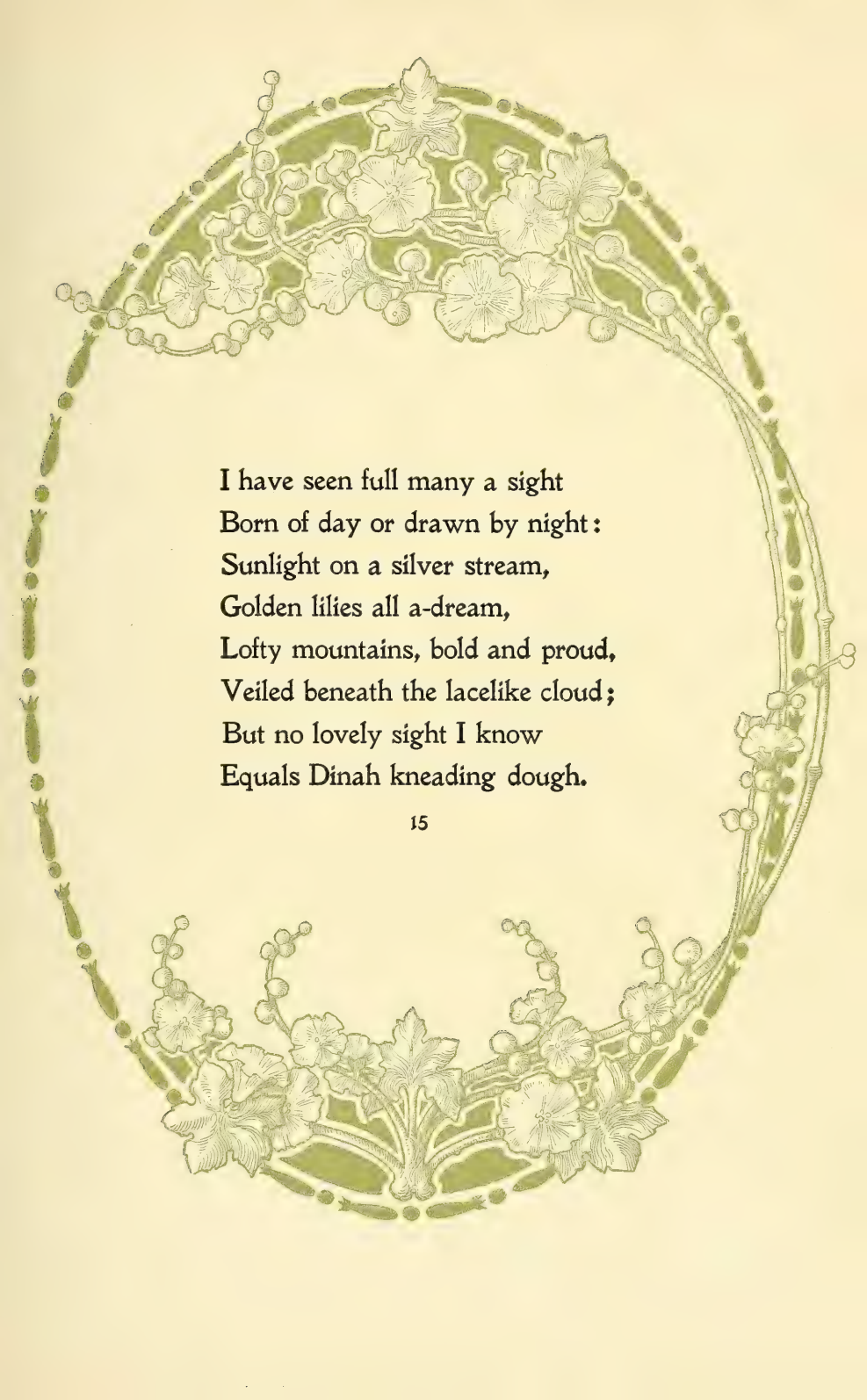






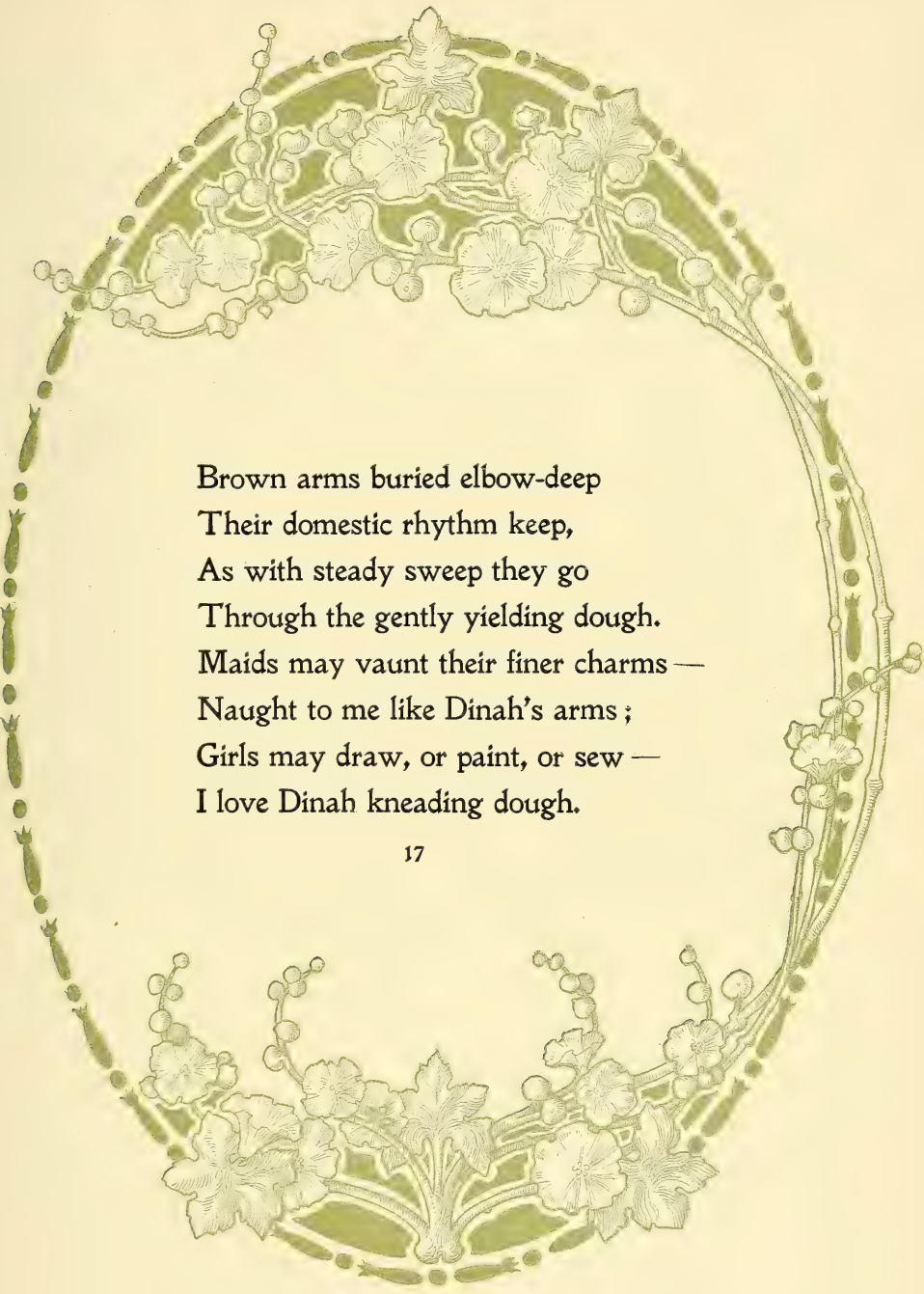






I have seen full many a sight  
Born of day or drawn by night :  
Sunlight on a silver stream,  
Golden lilies all a-dream,  
Lofty mountains, bold and proud,  
Veiled beneath the lacelike cloud ;  
But no lovely sight I know  
Equals Dinah kneading dough.

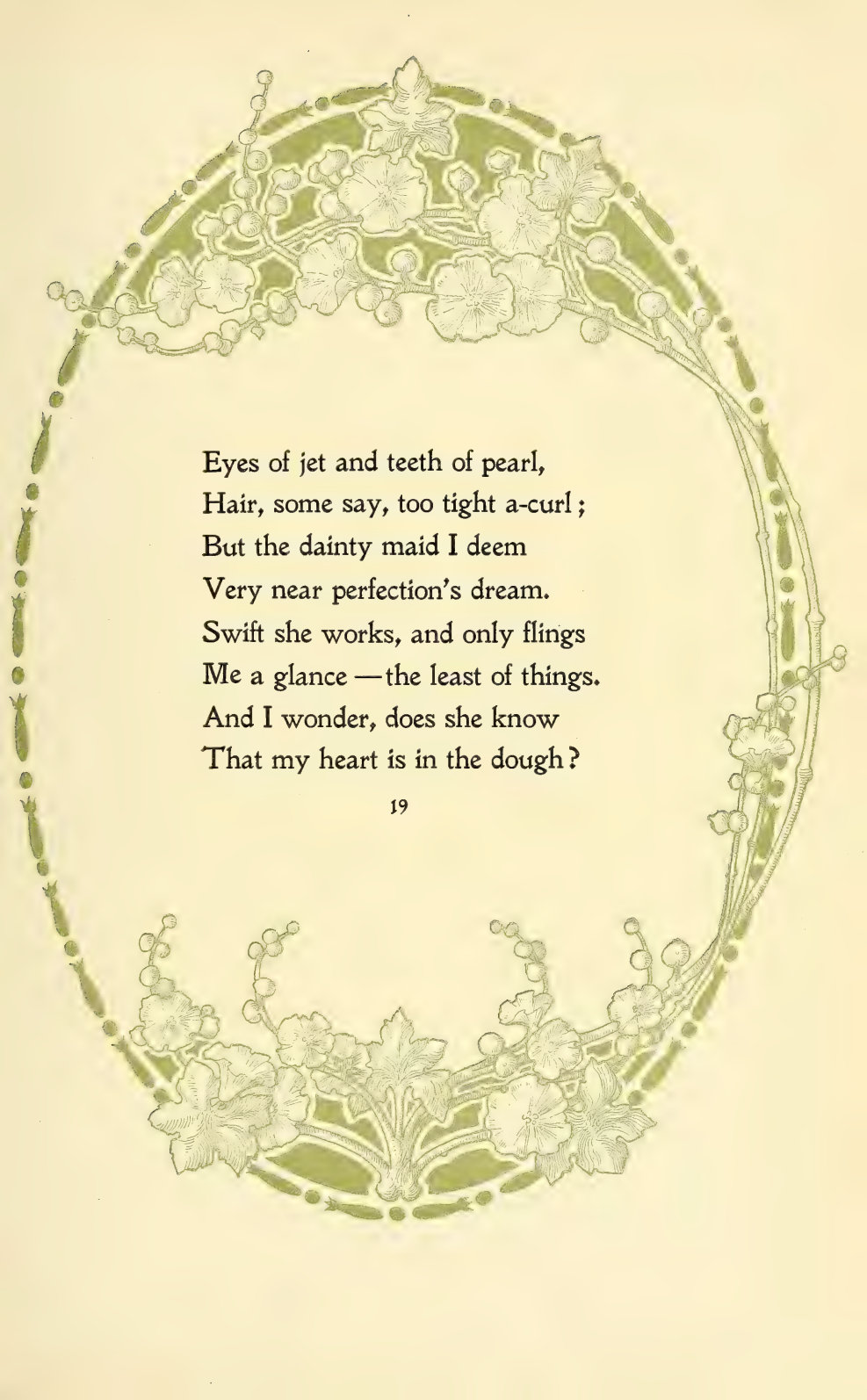




Brown arms buried elbow-deep  
Their domestic rhythm keep,  
As with steady sweep they go  
Through the gently yielding dough.  
Maids may vaunt their finer charms —  
Naught to me like Dinah's arms ;  
Girls may draw, or paint, or sew —  
I love Dinah kneading dough.



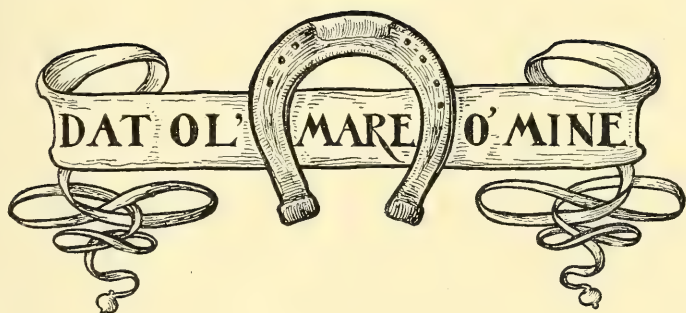




Eyes of jet and teeth of pearl,  
Hair, some say, too tight a-curl ;  
But the dainty maid I deem  
Very near perfection's dream.  
Swift she works, and only flings  
Me a glance — the least of things.  
And I wonder, does she know  
That my heart is in the dough ?





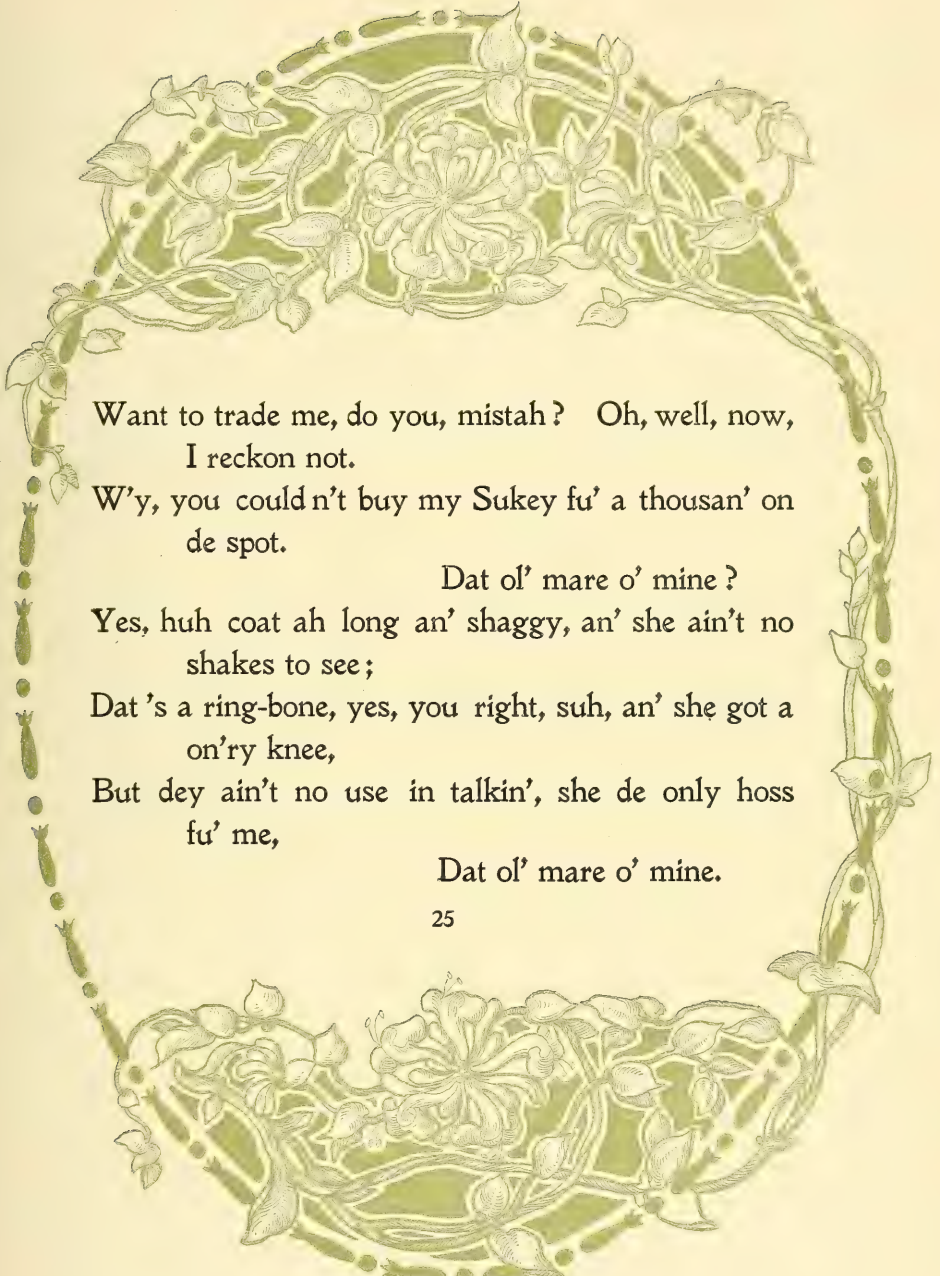












Want to trade me, do you, mistah? Oh, well, now,  
I reckon not.

W'y, you could n't buy my Sukey fu' a thousan' on  
de spot.

Dat ol' mare o' mine?

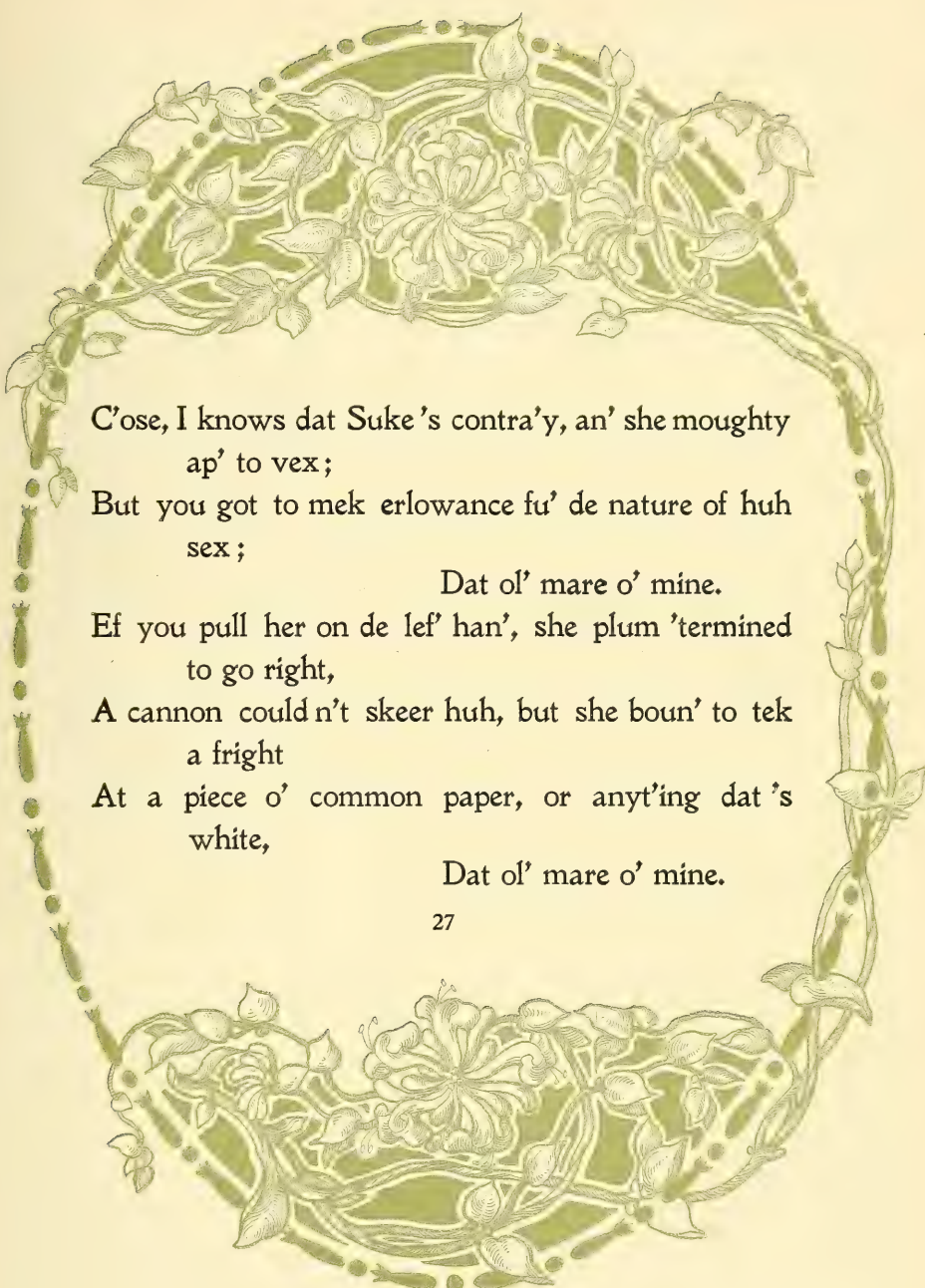
Yes, huh coat ah long an' shaggy, an' she ain't no  
shakes to see;

Dat 's a ring-bone, yes, you right, suh, an' she got a  
on'ry knee,

But dey ain't no use in talkin', she de only hoss  
fu' me,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.





C'ose, I knows dat Suke's contra'y, an' she moughty  
ap' to vex;

But you got to mek erlowance fu' de nature of huh  
sex;

Dat ol' mare o' mine.

Ef you pull her on de lef' han', she plum 'terminated  
to go right,

A cannon could n't skeer huh, but she boun' to tek  
a fright

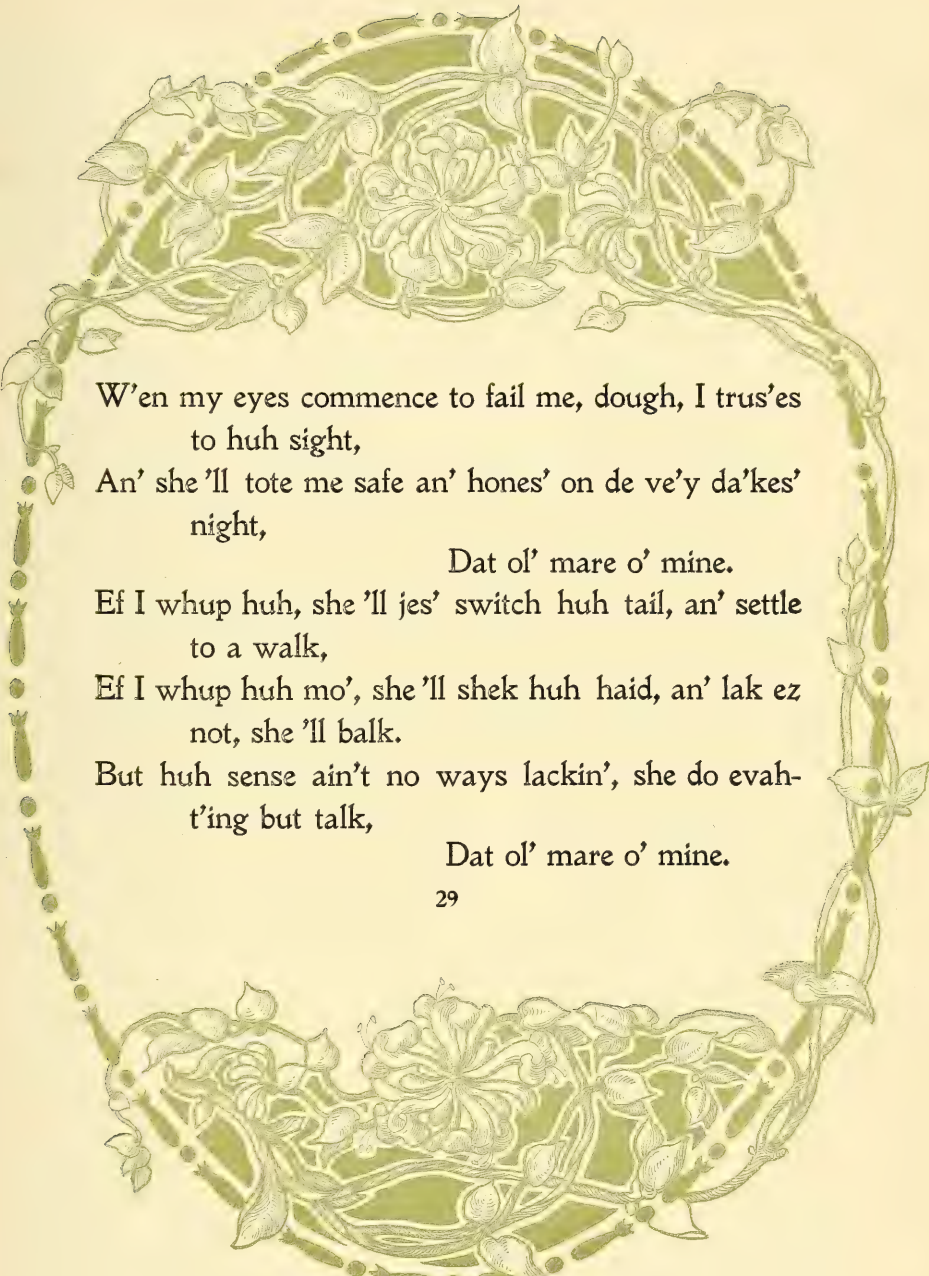
At a piece o' common paper, or anyt'ing dat's  
white,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.









W'en my eyes commence to fail me, dough, I trus'es  
to huh sight,

An' she'll tote me safe an' hones' on de ve'y da'kes'  
night,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.

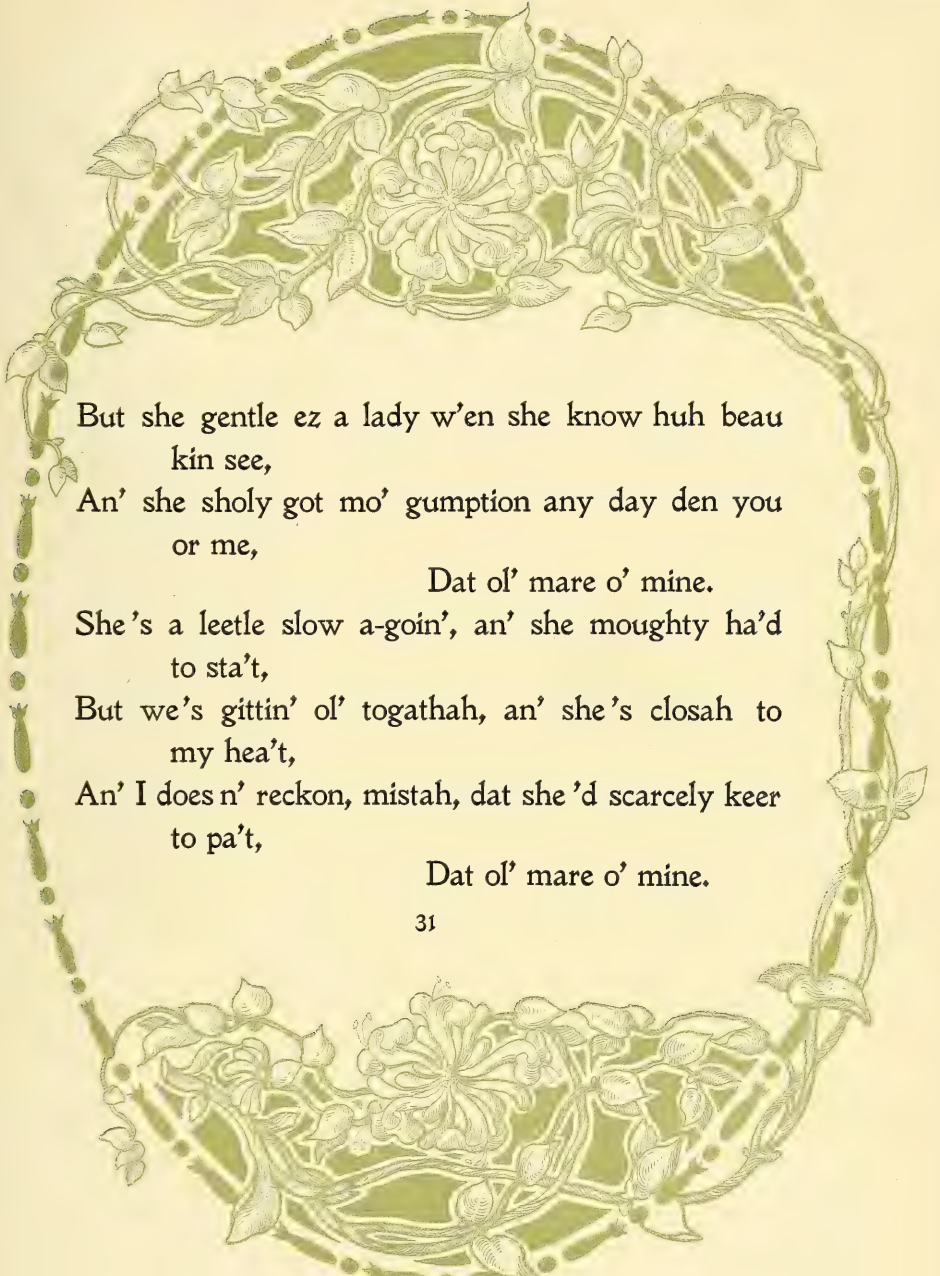
Ef I whup huh, she'll jes' switch huh tail, an' settle  
to a walk,

Ef I whup huh mo', she'll shek huh haid, an' lak ez  
not, she'll balk.

But huh sense ain't no ways lackin', she do evah-  
t'ing but talk,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.





But she gentle ez a lady w'en she know huh beau  
kin see,

An' she sholy got mo' gumption any day den you  
or me,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.

She's a leetle slow a-goin', an' she moughty ha'd  
to sta't,

But we's gittin' ol' togethah, an' she's closah to  
my hea't,

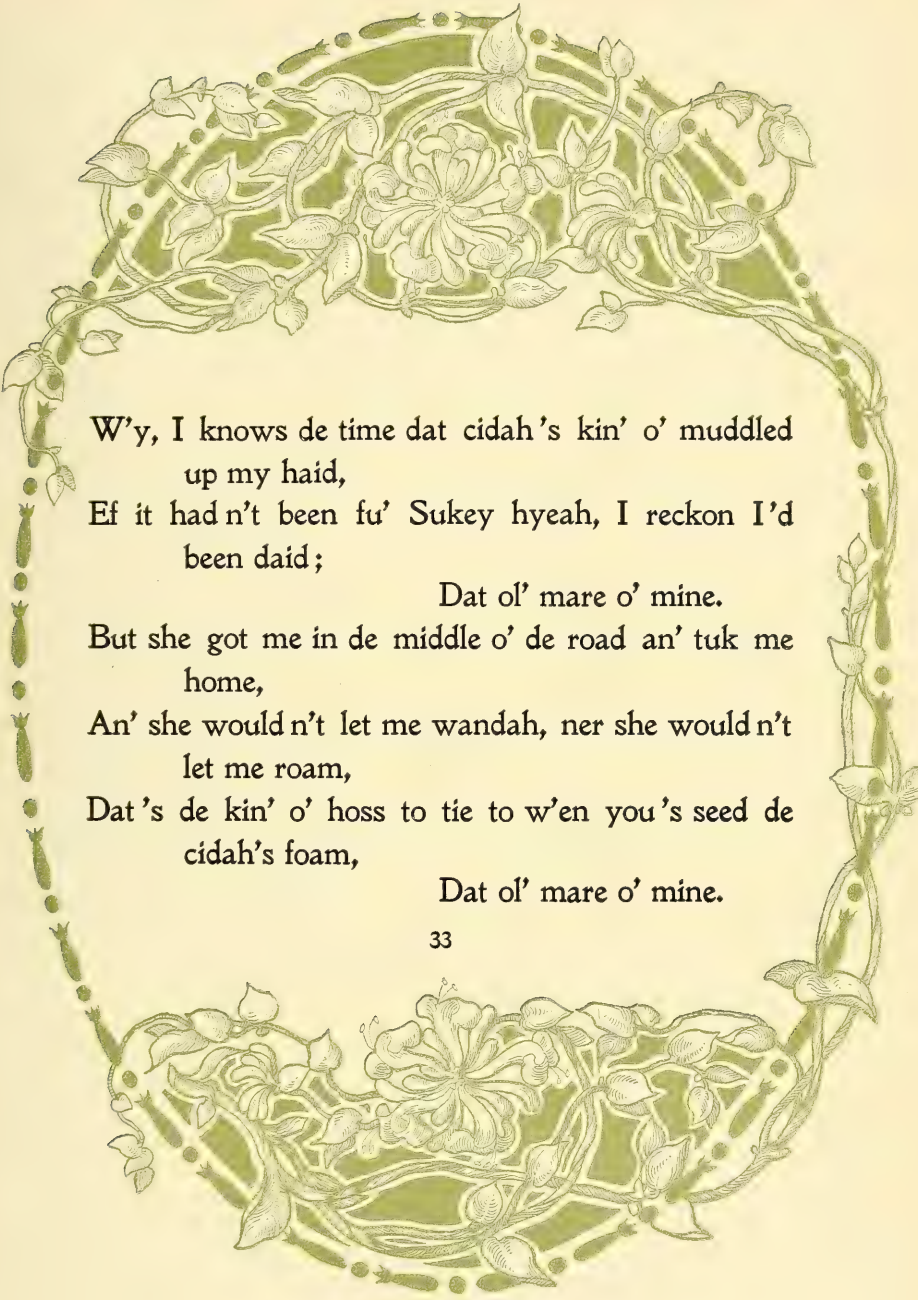
An' I does n' reckon, mistah, dat she 'd scarcely keer  
to pa't,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.







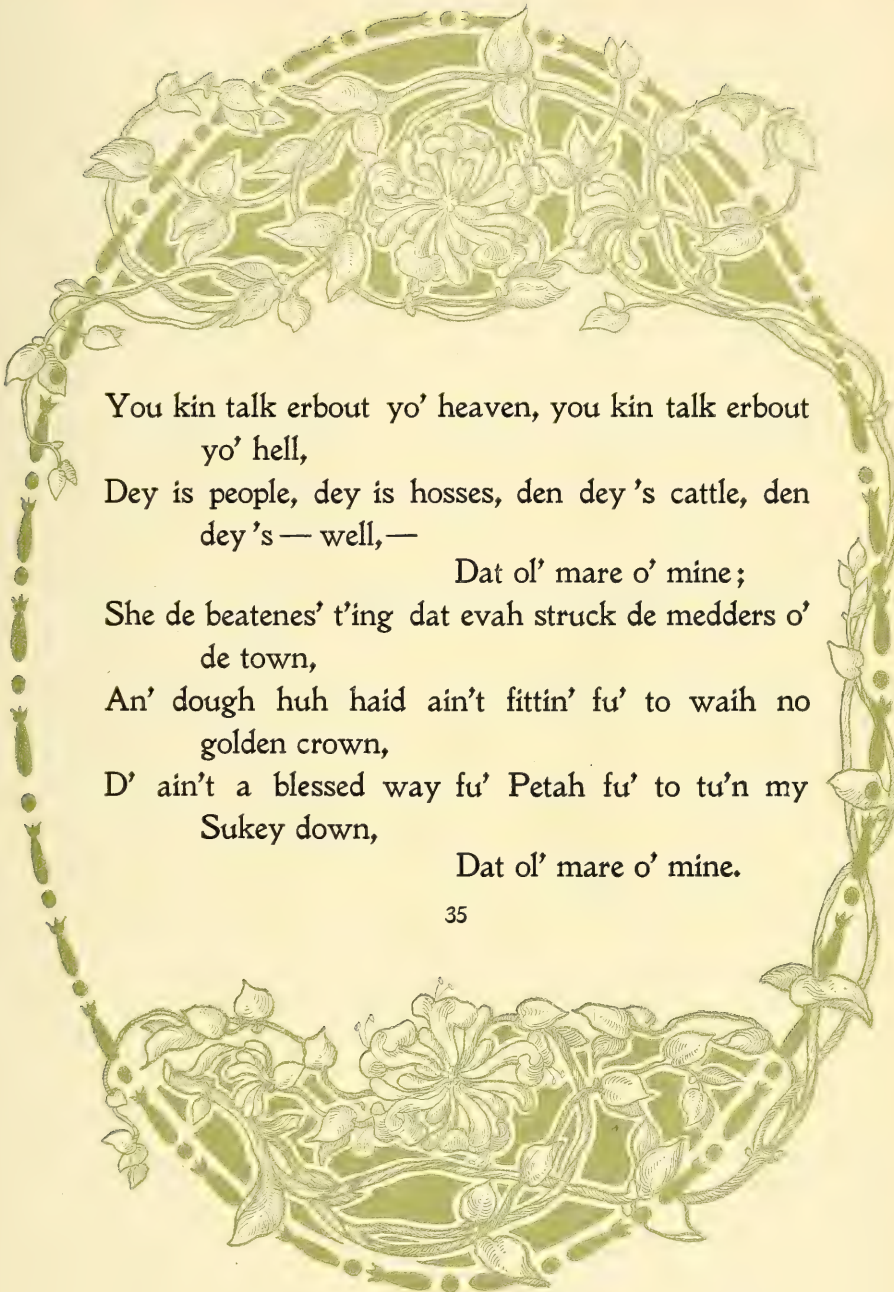


W'y, I knows de time dat cidah's kin' o' muddled  
up my haid,  
Ef it had n't been fu' Sukey hyeah, I reckon I'd  
been daid;

Dat ol' mare o' mine.  
But she got me in de middle o' de road an' tuk me  
home,  
An' she would n't let me wandah, ner she would n't  
let me roam,  
Dat's de kin' o' hoss to tie to w'en you's seed de  
cidah's foam,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.





You kin talk erbout yo' heaven, you kin talk erbout  
yo' hell,

Dey is people, dey is hosses, den dey's cattle, den  
dey's — well, —

Dat ol' mare o' mine;  
She de beatenes' t'ing dat evah struck de medders o'  
de town,

An' dough huh haid ain't fittin' fu' to waih no  
golden crown,

D' ain't a blessed way fu' Petah fu' to tu'n my  
Sukey down,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.





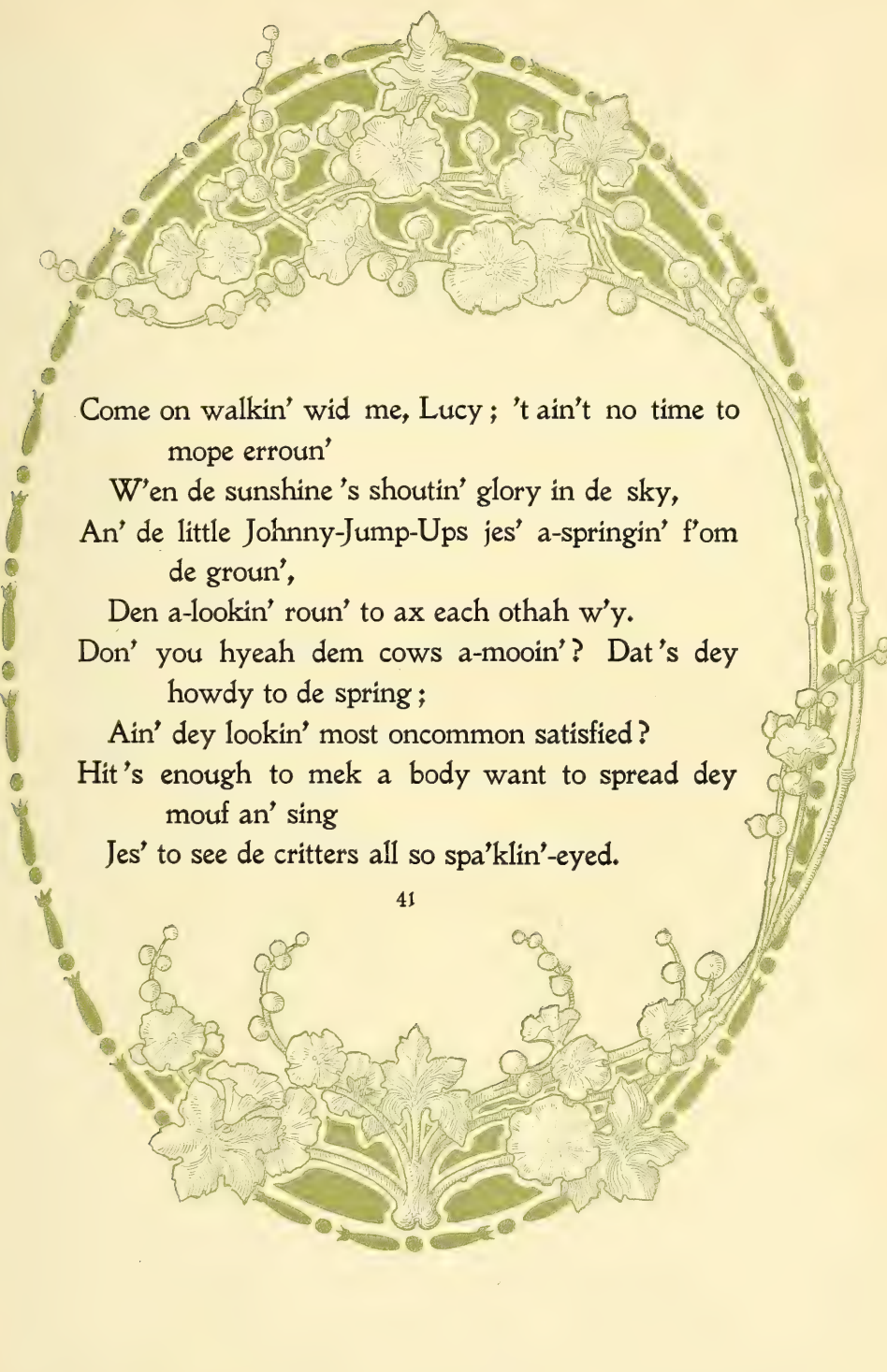












Come on walkin' wid me, Lucy ; 't ain't no time to  
mope erroun'

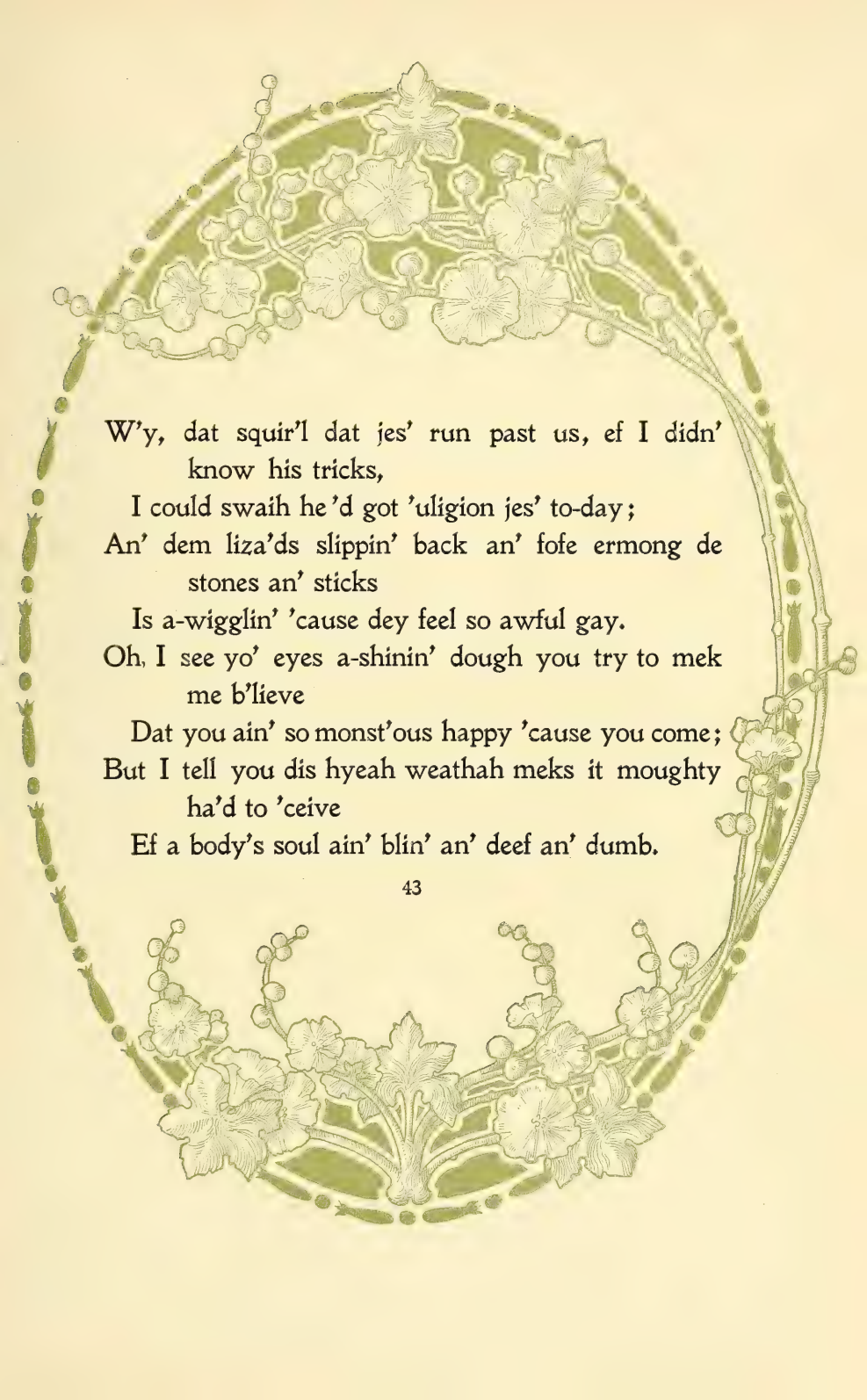
W'en de sunshine 's shoutin' glory in de sky,  
An' de little Johnny-Jump-Ups jes' a-springin' f'om  
de groun',

Den a-lookin' roun' to ax each othah w'y.  
Don' you hyeah dem cows a-mooiin'? Dat's dey  
howdy to de spring ;

Ain' dey lookin' most oncommon satisfied?  
Hit's enough to mek a body want to spread dey  
mouf an' sing

Jes' to see de critters all so spa'klin'-eyed.





W'y, dat squir'l dat jes' run past us, ef I didn'  
know his tricks,

I could swaih he'd got 'uligion jes' to-day;  
An' dem liza'ds slippin' back an' fofe ermong de  
stones an' sticks

Is a-wigglin' 'cause dey feel so awful gay.  
Oh, I see yo' eyes a-shinin' dough you try to mek  
me b'lieve

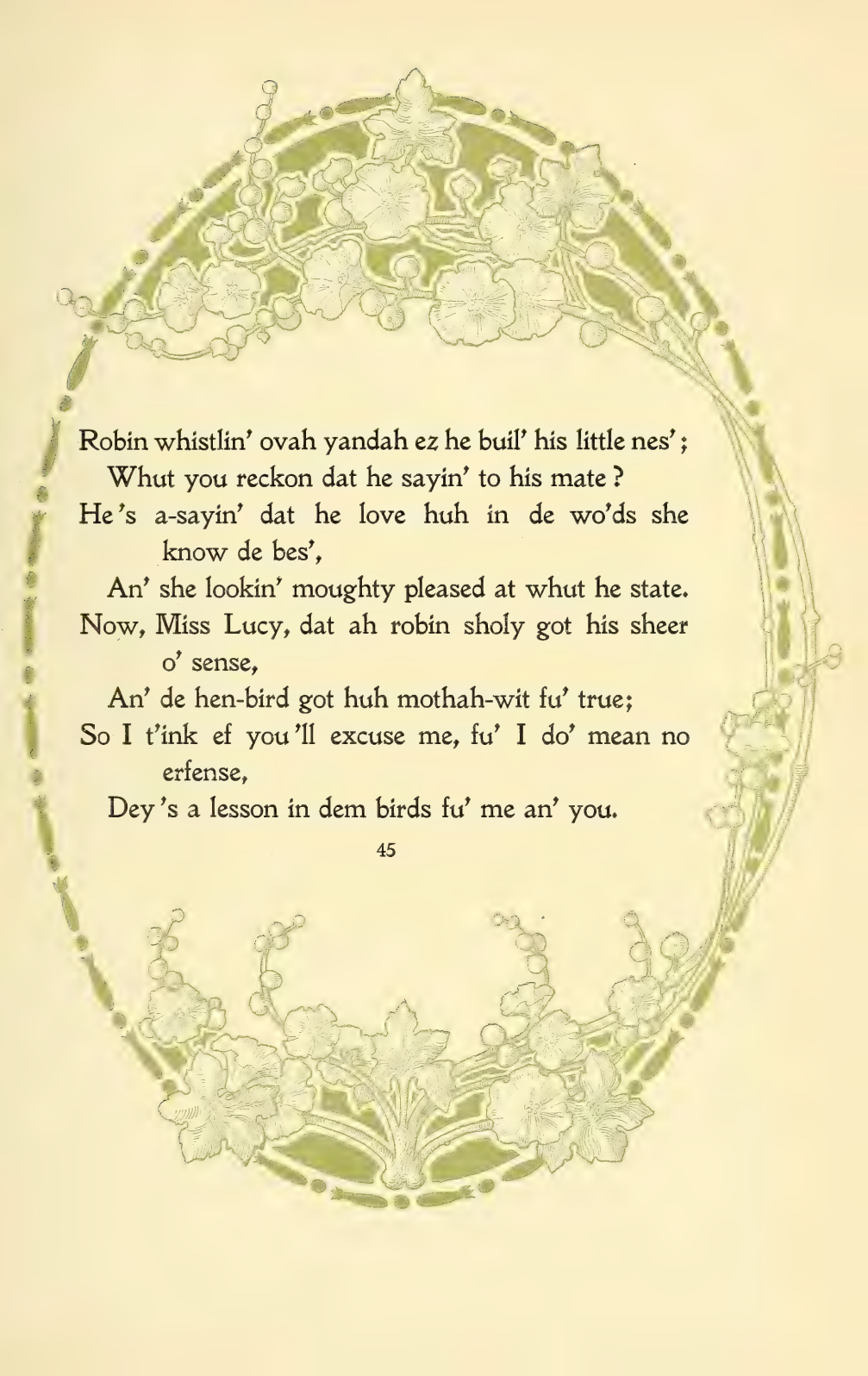
Dat you ain' so monst'ous happy 'cause you come;  
But I tell you dis hyeah weathah meks it moughty  
ha'd to 'ceive

Ef a body's soul ain' blin' an' deaf an' dumb.









Robin whistlin' ovah yandah ez he buil' his little nes';  
Whut you reckon dat he sayin' to his mate?

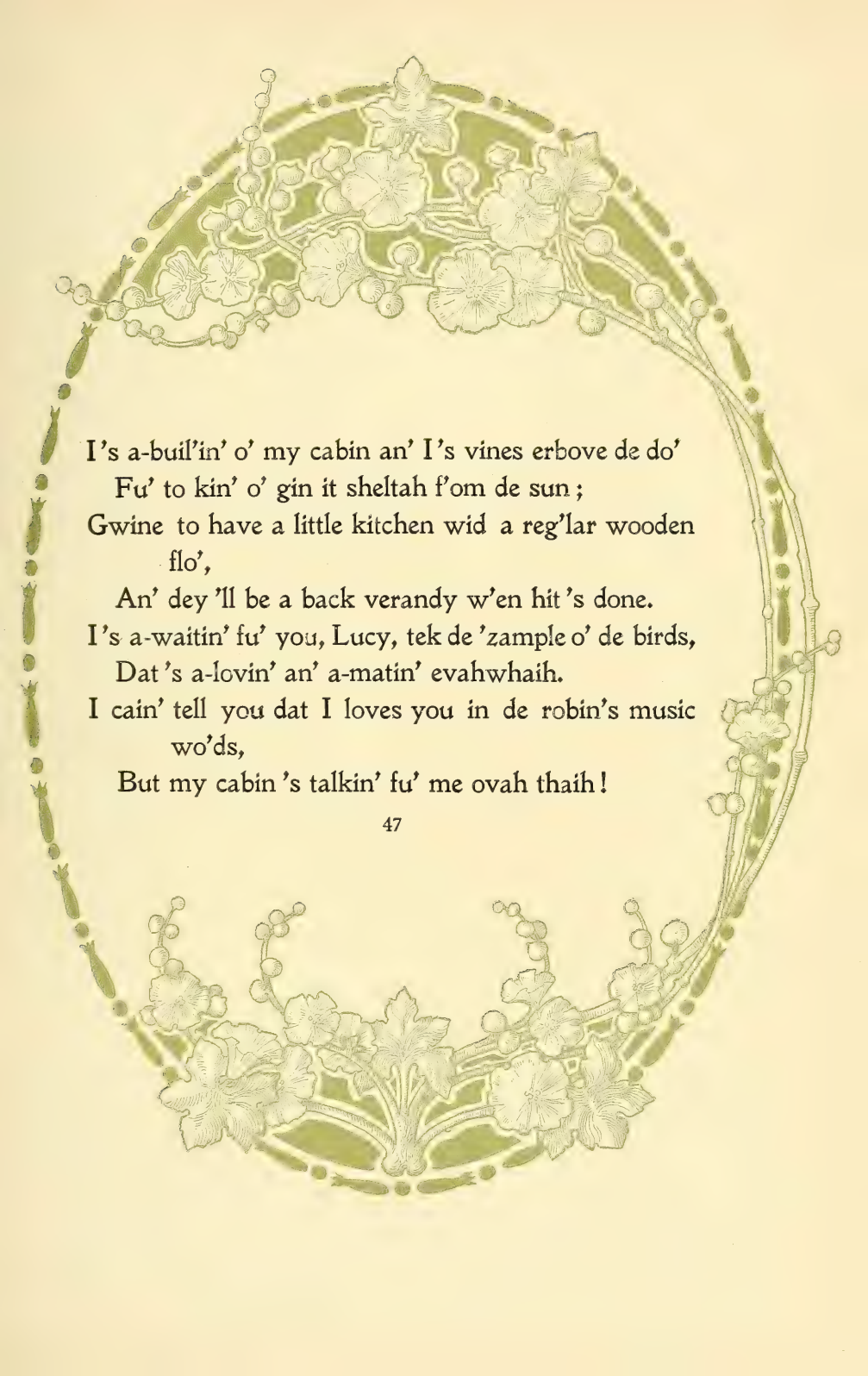
He's a-sayin' dat he love huh in de wo'ds she  
know de bes',

An' she lookin' moughty pleased at whut he state.  
Now, Miss Lucy, dat ah robin sholy got his sheer  
o' sense,

An' de hen-bird got huh mothah-wit fu' true;  
So I t'ink ef you'll excuse me, fu' I do' mean no  
erfense,

Dey's a lesson in dem birds fu' me an' you.

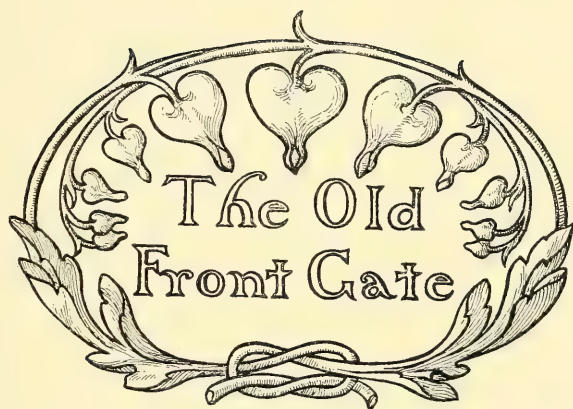




I's a-buil'in' o' my cabin an' I's vines erbove de do'  
Fu' to kin' o' gin it sheltah f'om de sun ;  
Gwine to have a little kitchen wid a reg'lar wooden  
flo',  
An' dey 'll be a back verandy w'en hit's done.  
I's a-waitin' fu' you, Lucy, tek de 'zample o' de birds,  
Dat's a-lovin' an' a-matin' evahwhaih.  
I cain' tell you dat I loves you in de robin's music  
wo'ds,  
But my cabin 's talkin' fu' me ovah thaih !





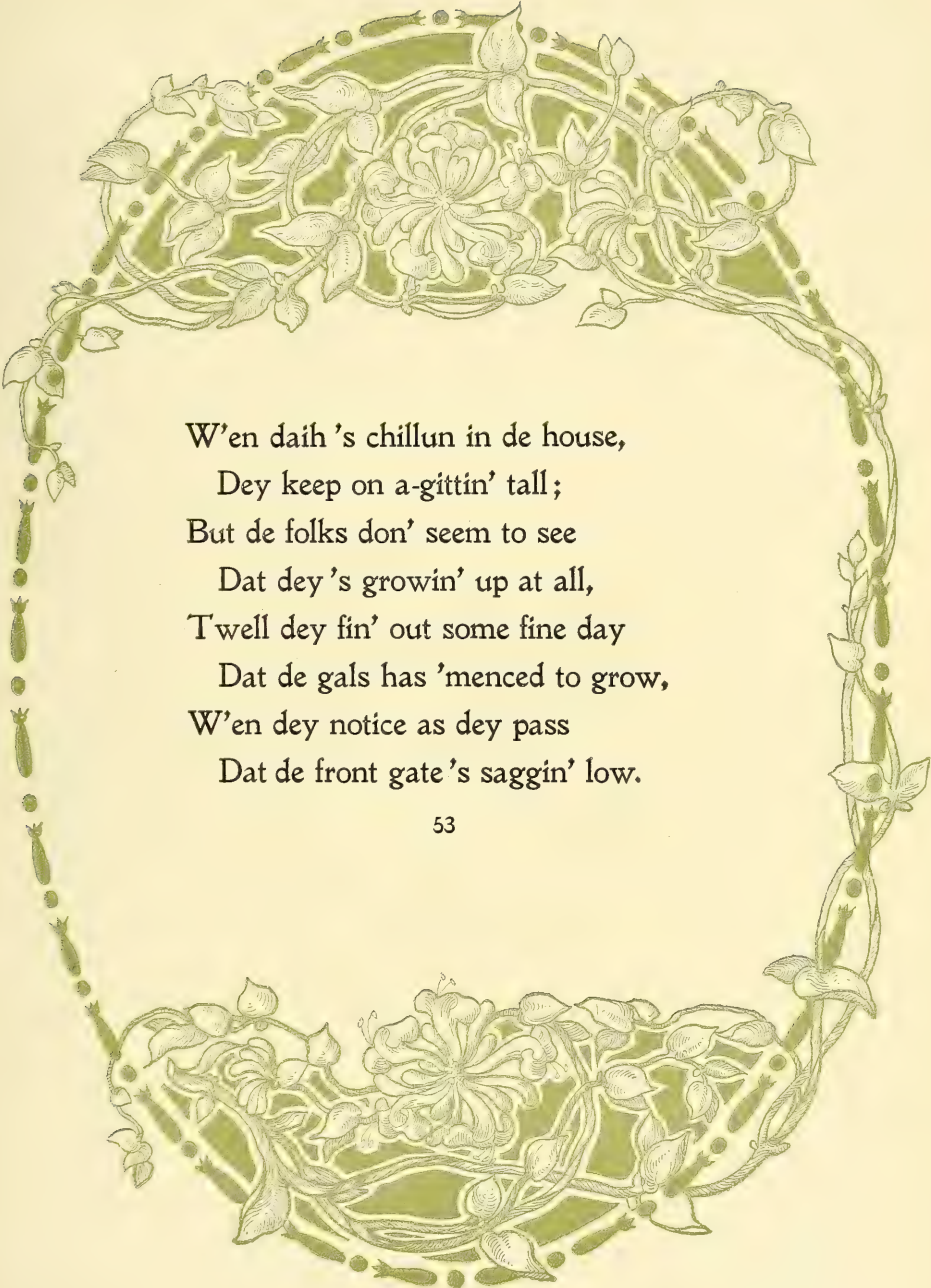






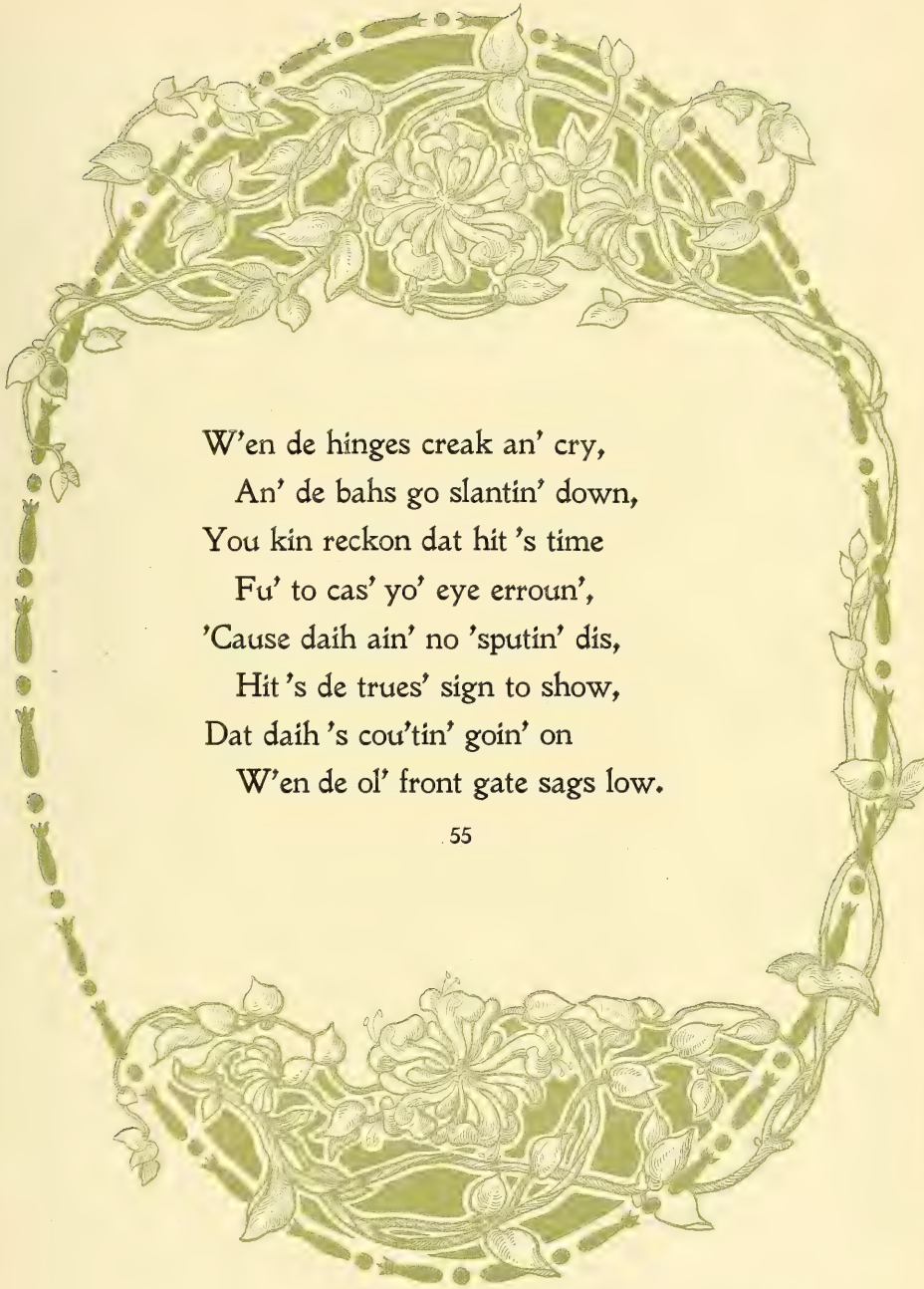






W'en daih 's chillun in de house,  
Dey keep on a-gittin' tall;  
But de folks don' seem to see  
Dat dey 's growin' up at all,  
Twell dey fin' out some fine day  
Dat de gals has 'menced to grow,  
W'en dey notice as dey pass  
Dat de front gate 's saggin' low.



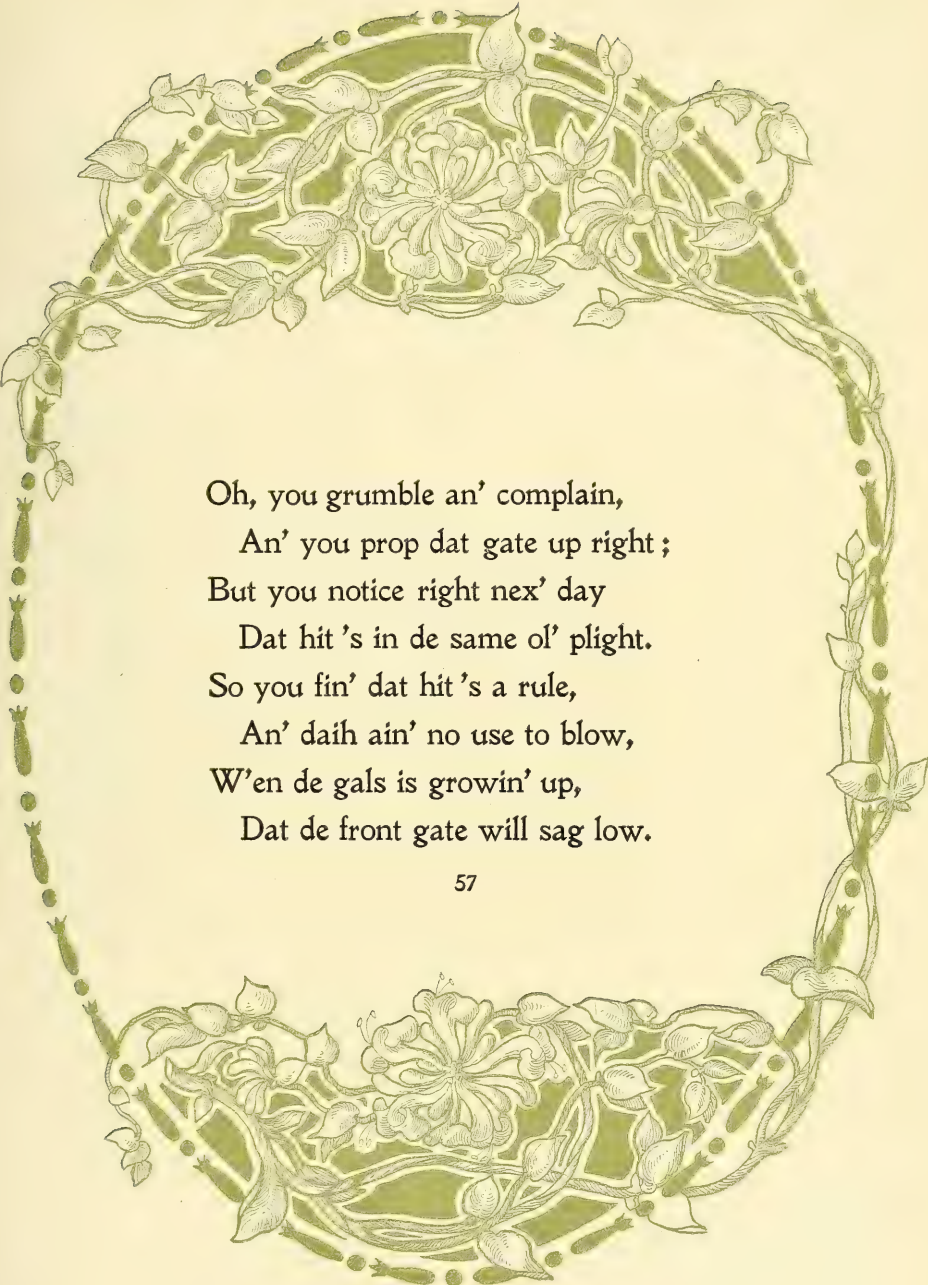


W'en de hinges creak an' cry,  
An' de bahs go slantin' down,  
You kin reckon dat hit 's time  
Fu' to cas' yo' eye erroun',  
'Cause daih ain' no 'sputin' dis,  
Hit 's de trues' sign to show,  
Dat daih 's cou'tin' goin' on  
W'en de ol' front gate sags low.



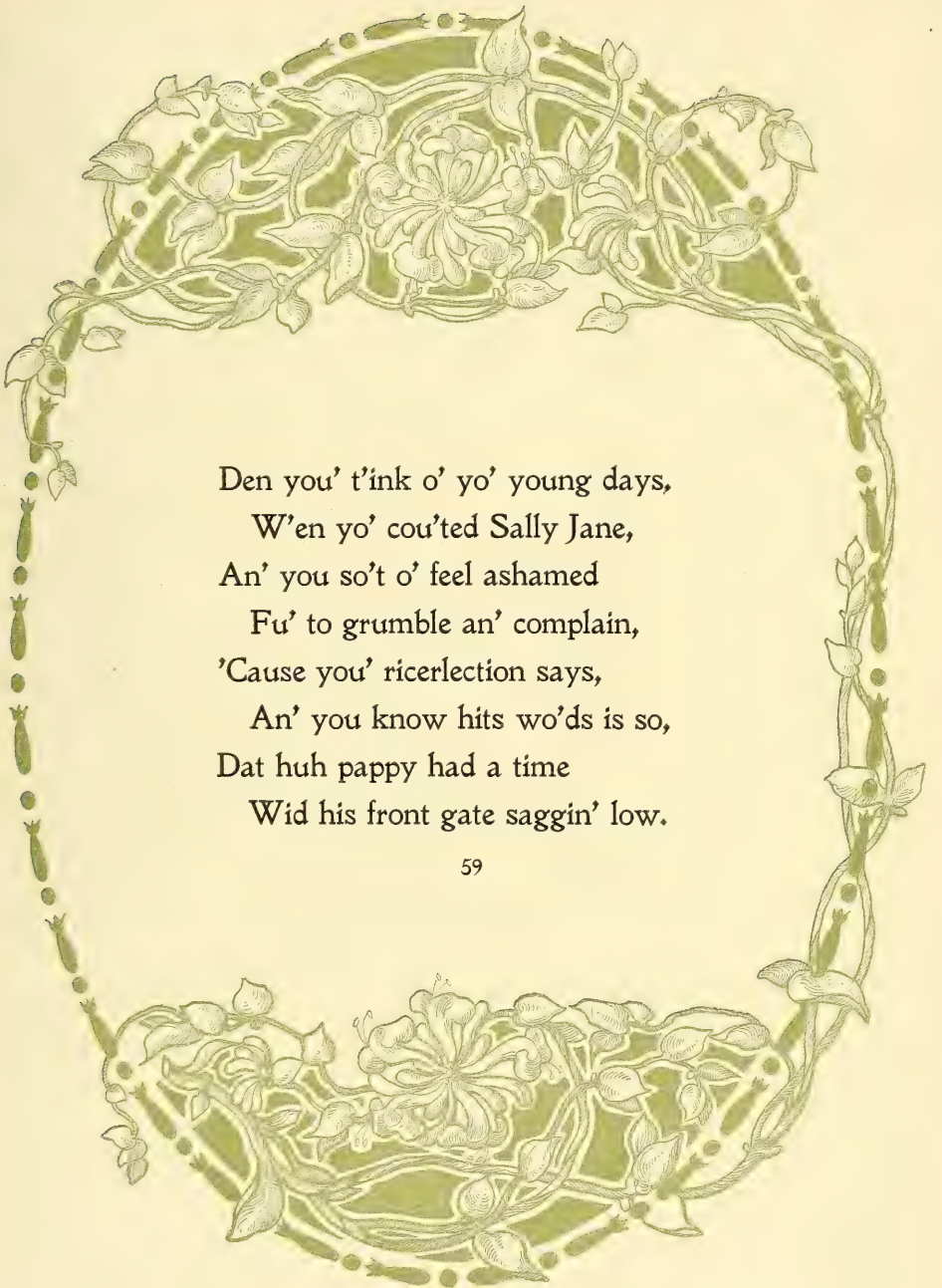






Oh, you grumble an' complain,  
An' you prop dat gate up right ;  
But you notice right nex' day  
Dat hit 's in de same ol' plight.  
So you fin' dat hit 's a rule,  
An' daih ain' no use to blow,  
W'en de gals is growin' up,  
Dat de front gate will sag low.



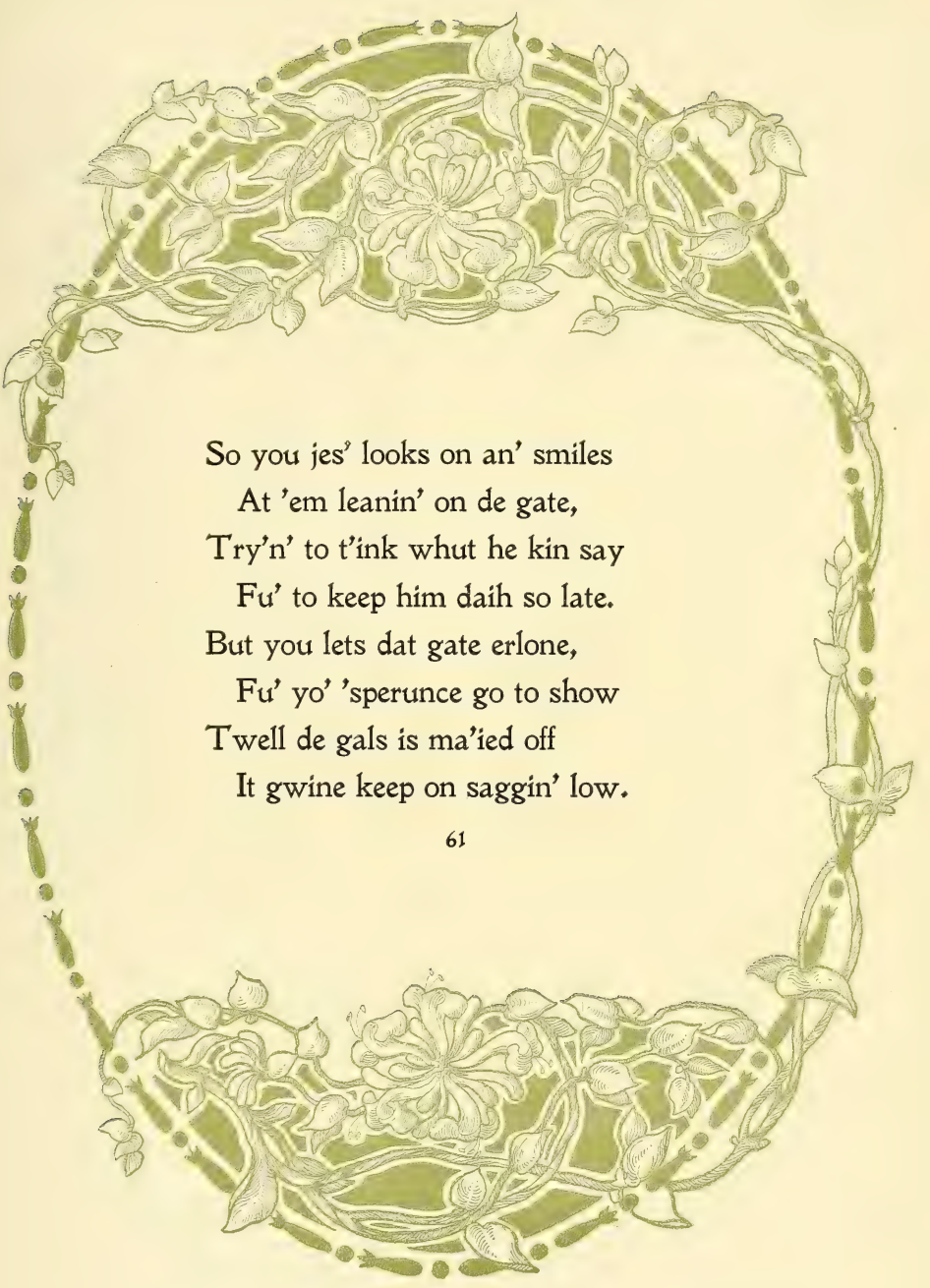


Den you' t'ink o' yo' young days,  
W'en yo' cou'ted Sally Jane,  
An' you so't o' feel ashamed  
Fu' to grumble an' complain,  
'Cause you' ricerlection says,  
An' you know hits wo'ds is so,  
Dat huh pappy had a time  
Wid his front gate saggin' low.



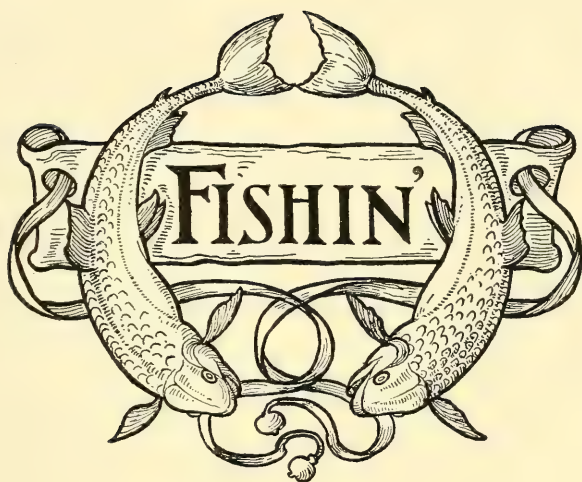






So you jes' looks on an' smiles  
At 'em leanin' on de gate,  
Try'n' to t'ink whut he kin say  
Fu' to keep him daih so late.  
But you lets dat gate erlone,  
Fu' yo' 'sperunce go to show  
T'well de gals is ma'ied off  
It gwine keep on saggin' low.



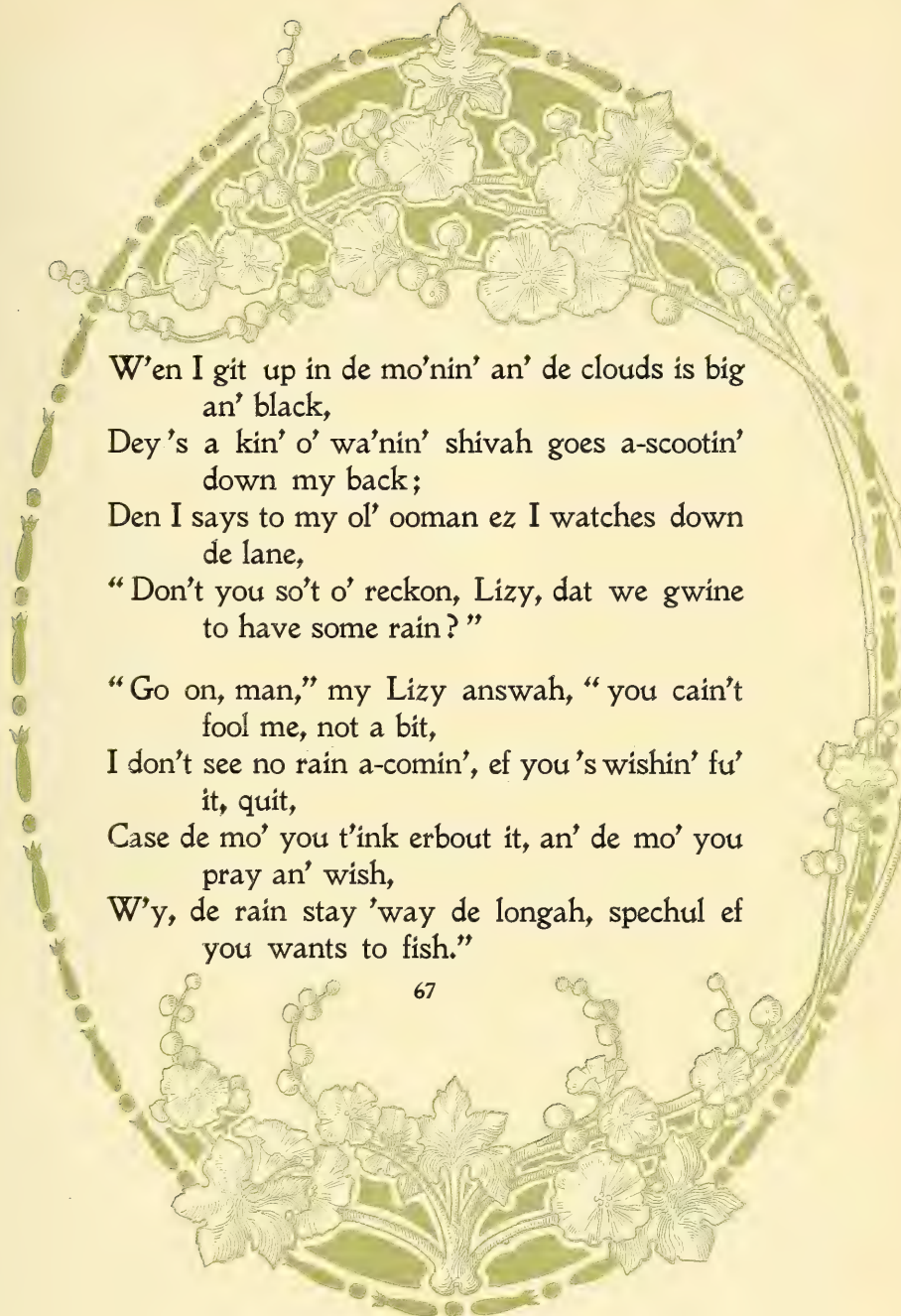












W'en I git up in de mo'nin' an' de clouds is big  
an' black,

Dey's a kin' o' wa'nin' shivah goes a-scootin'  
down my back;

Den I says to my ol' ooman ez I watches down  
de lane,

"Don't you so't o' reckon, Lizy, dat we gwine  
to have some rain?"

"Go on, man," my Lizy answah, "you cain't  
fool me, not a bit,

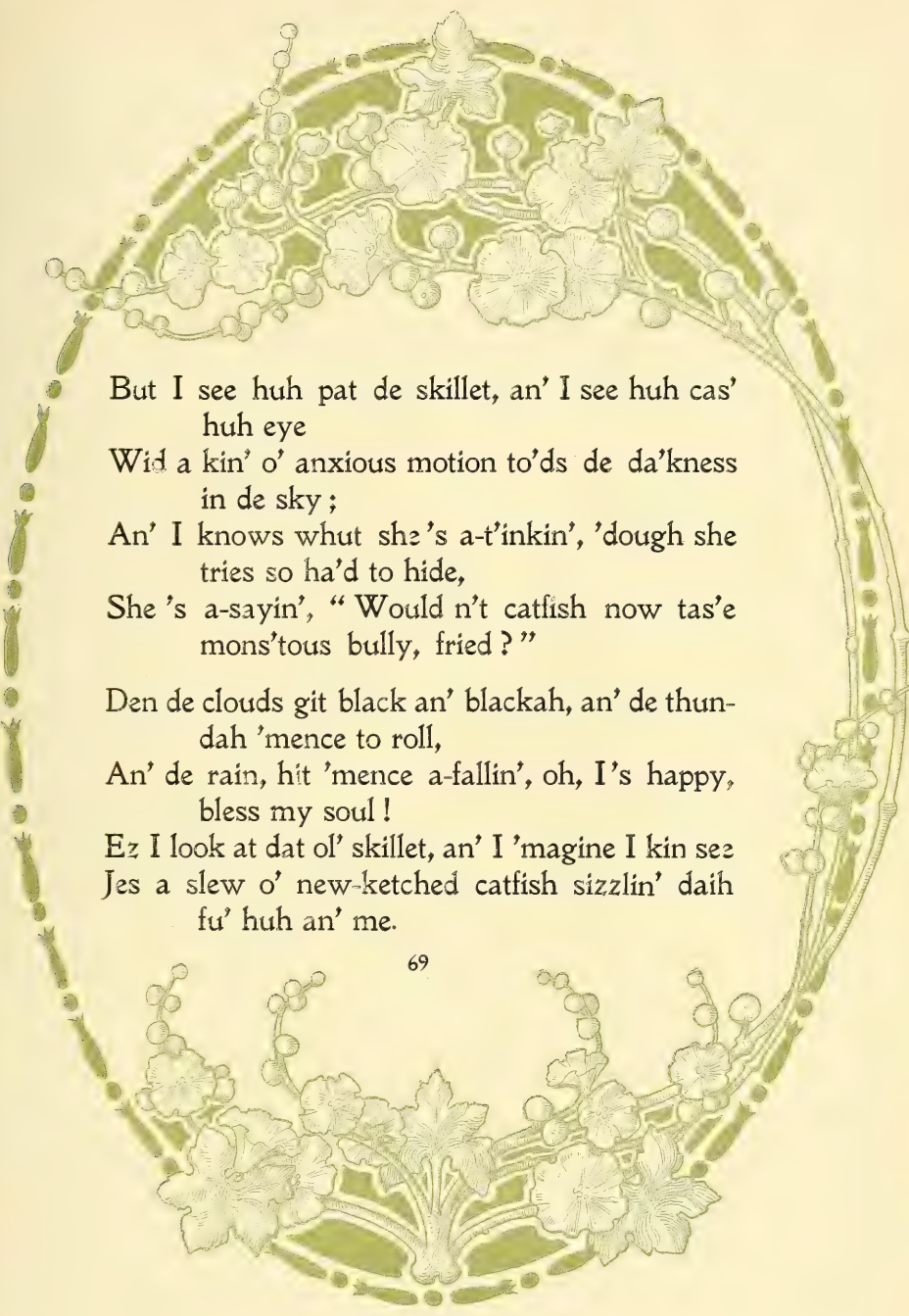
I don't see no rain a-comin', ef you's wishin' fu'  
it, quit,

Case de mo' you t'ink erbout it, an' de mo' you  
pray an' wish,

W'y, de rain stay 'way de longah, spechul ef  
you wants to fish."







But I see huh pat de skillet, an' I see huh cas'  
huh eye

Wid a kin' o' anxious motion to'ds de da'kness  
in de sky;

An' I knows whut she's a-t'inkin', 'dough she  
tries so ha'd to hide,

She 's a-sayin', " Would n't catfish now tas'e  
mons'tous bully, fried ? "

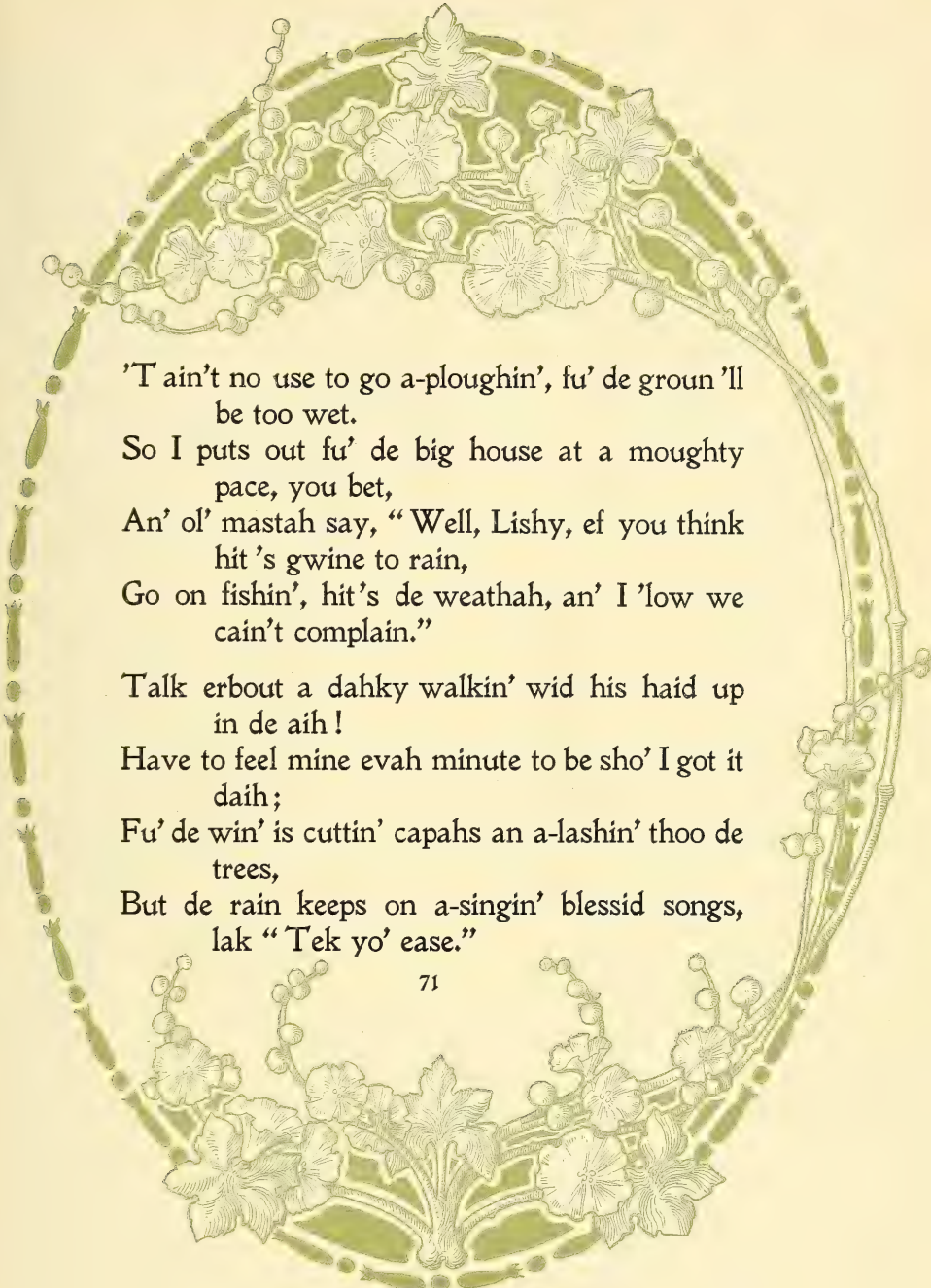
Den de clouds git black an' blackah, an' de thun-  
dah 'mence to roll,

An' de rain, hit 'mence a-fallin', oh, I's happy,  
bless my soul !

Ez I look at dat ol' skillet, an' I 'magine I kin sez  
Jes a slew o' new-ketched catfish sizzlin' daih  
fu' huh an' me.







'T ain't no use to go a-ploughin', fu' de groun 'll  
be too wet.

So I puts out fu' de big house at a moughty  
pace, you bet,

An' ol' mastah say, "Well, Lishy, ef you think  
hit 's gwine to rain,

Go on fishin', hit's de weathah, an' I 'low we  
cain't complain."

Talk erbout a dahky walkin' wid his haïd up  
in de aih !

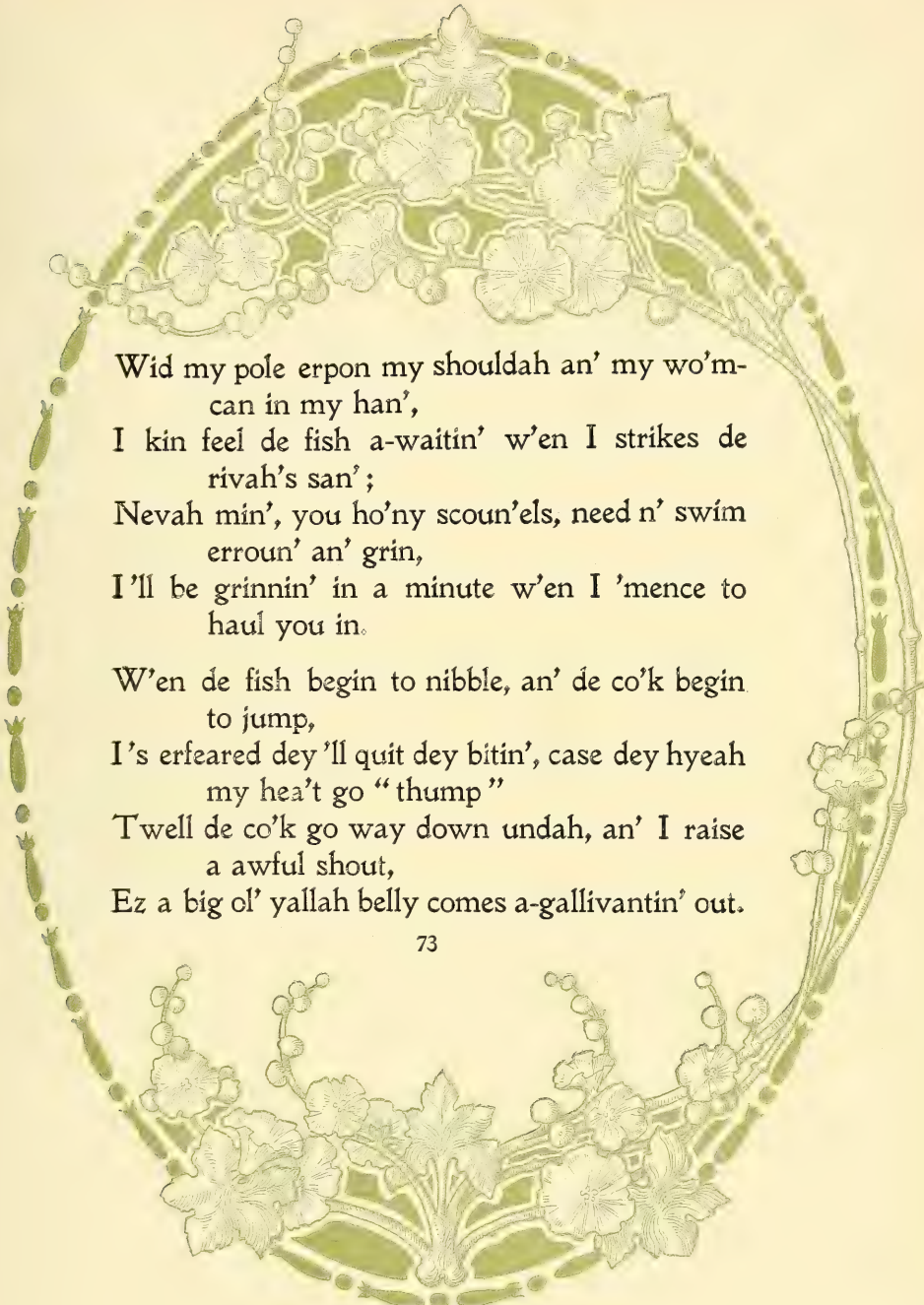
Have to feel mine evah minute to be sho' I got it  
daih ;

Fu' de win' is cuttin' capahs an a-lashin' thoo de  
trees,

But de rain keeps on a-singin' blessid songs,  
lak "Tek yo' ease."





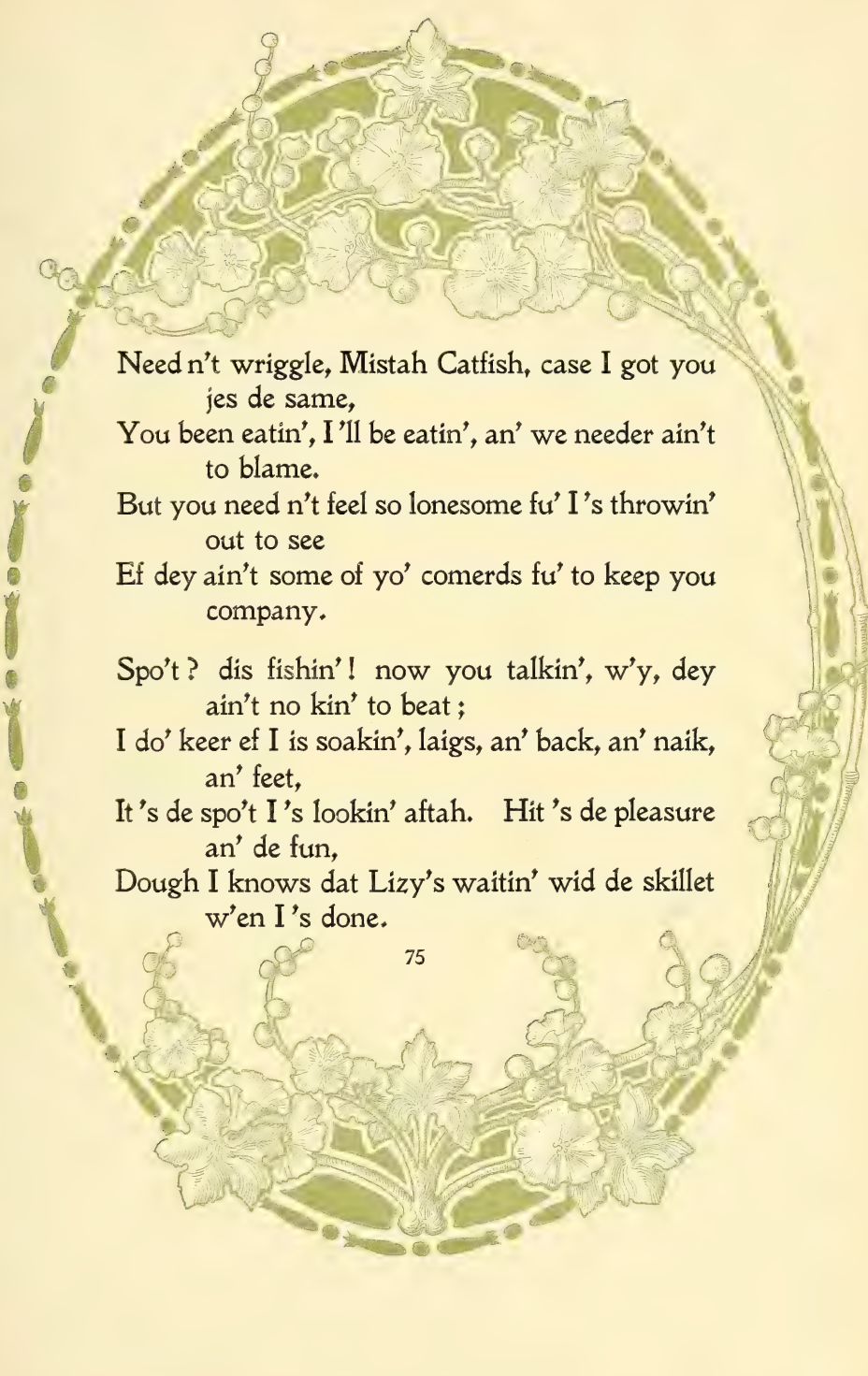


Wid my pole erpon my shouldah an' my wo'm-  
can in my han',  
I kin feel de fish a-waitin' w'en I strikes de  
rivah's san';  
Nevah min', you ho'ny scoun'els, need n' swim  
erroun' an' grin,  
I'll be grinnin' in a minute w'en I 'mence to  
haul you in.

W'en de fish begin to nibble, an' de co'k begin  
to jump,  
I's efereared dey 'll quit dey bitin', case dey hyeah  
my hea't go "thump"  
Twell de co'k go way down undah, an' I raise  
a awful shout,  
Ez a big ol' yallah belly comes a-gallivantin' out.



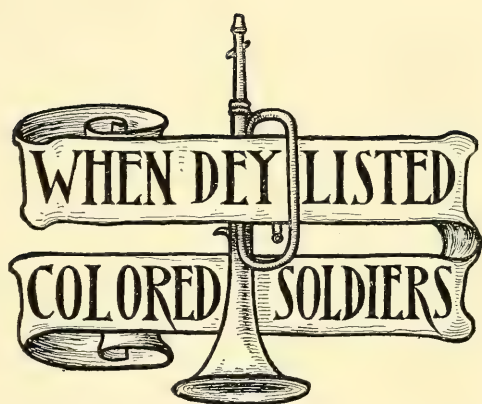




Need n't wriggle, Mistah Catfish, case I got you  
jes de same,  
You been eatin', I'll be eatin', an' we needer ain't  
to blame.  
But you need n't feel so lonesome fu' I's throwin'  
out to see  
Ef dey ain't some of yo' comerds fu' to keep you  
company.

Spo't? dis fishin'! now you talkin', w'y, dey  
ain't no kin' to beat;  
I do' keer ef I is soakin', laigs, an' back, an' naik,  
an' feet,  
It's de spo't I's lookin' aftah. Hit's de pleasure  
an' de fun,  
Dough I knows dat Lizy's waitin' wid de skillet  
w'en I's done.





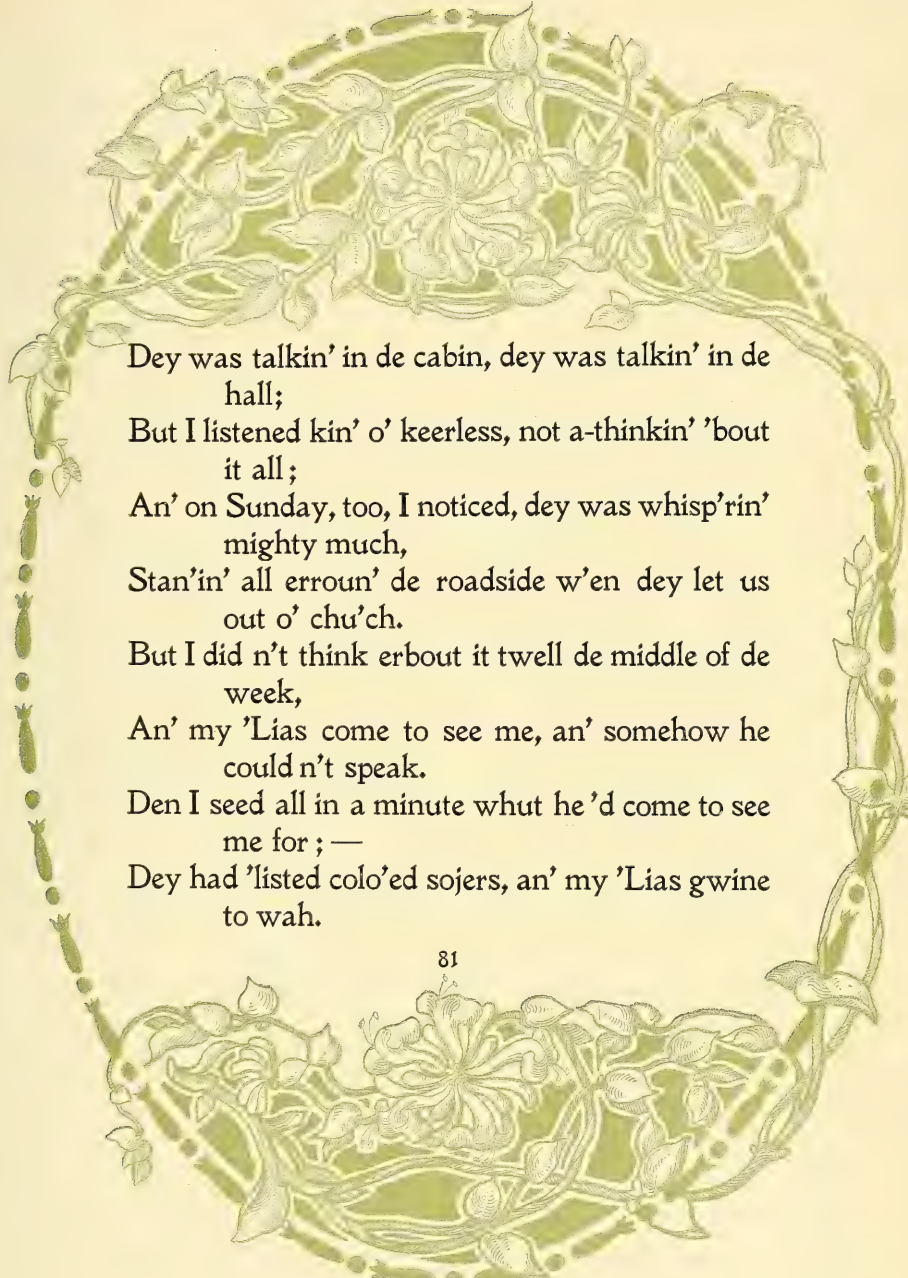












Dey was talkin' in de cabin, dey was talkin' in de  
hall;

But I listened kin' o' keerless, not a-thinkin' 'bout  
it all;

An' on Sunday, too, I noticed, dey was whisp'rin'  
mighty much,

Stan'in' all erroun' de roadside w'en dey let us  
out o' chu'ch.

But I did n't think erbout it twell de middle of de  
week,

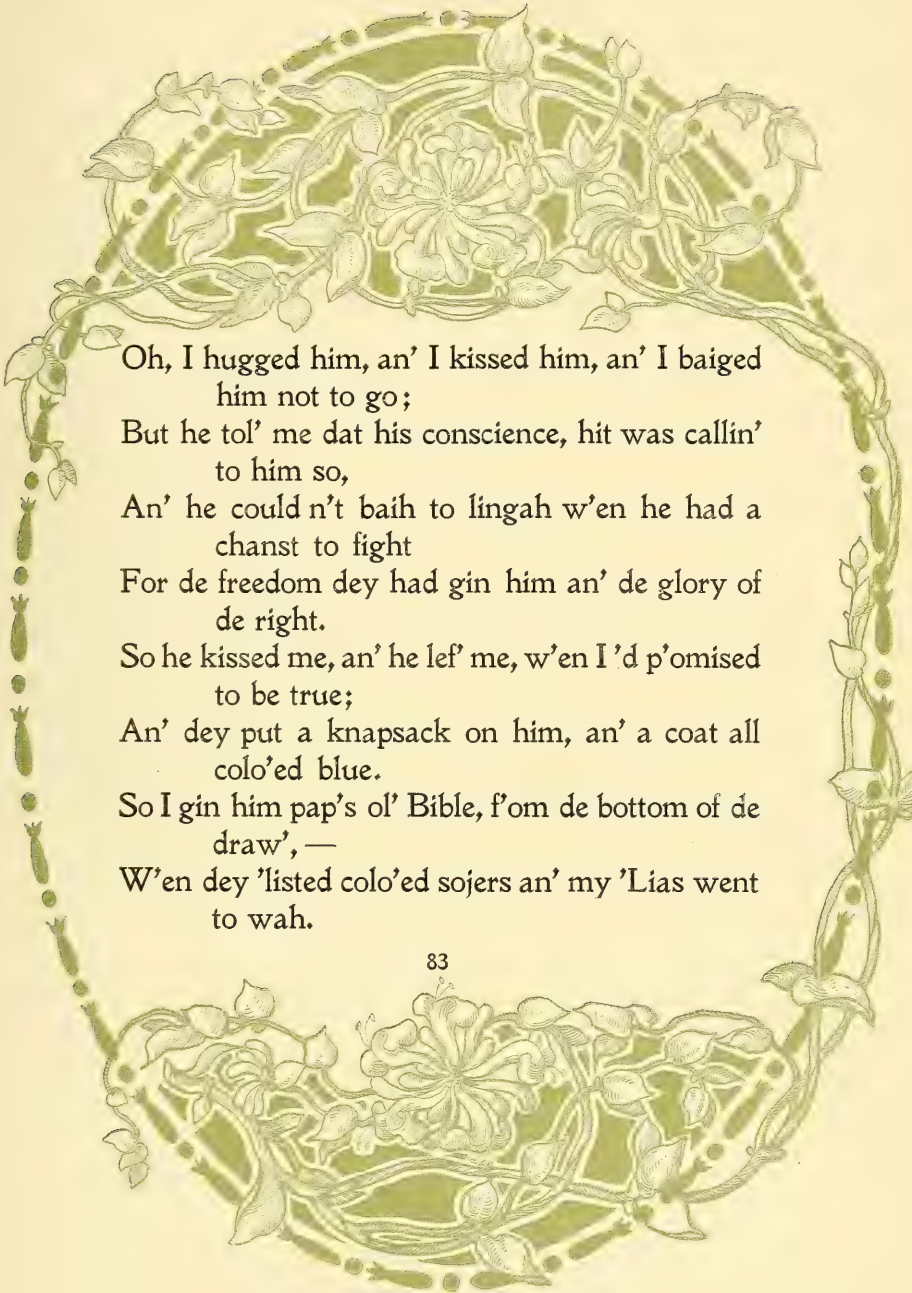
An' my 'Lias come to see me, an' somehow he  
could n't speak.

Den I seed all in a minute whut he'd come to see  
me for; —

Dey had 'listed colo'ed sojers, an' my 'Lias gwine  
to wah.



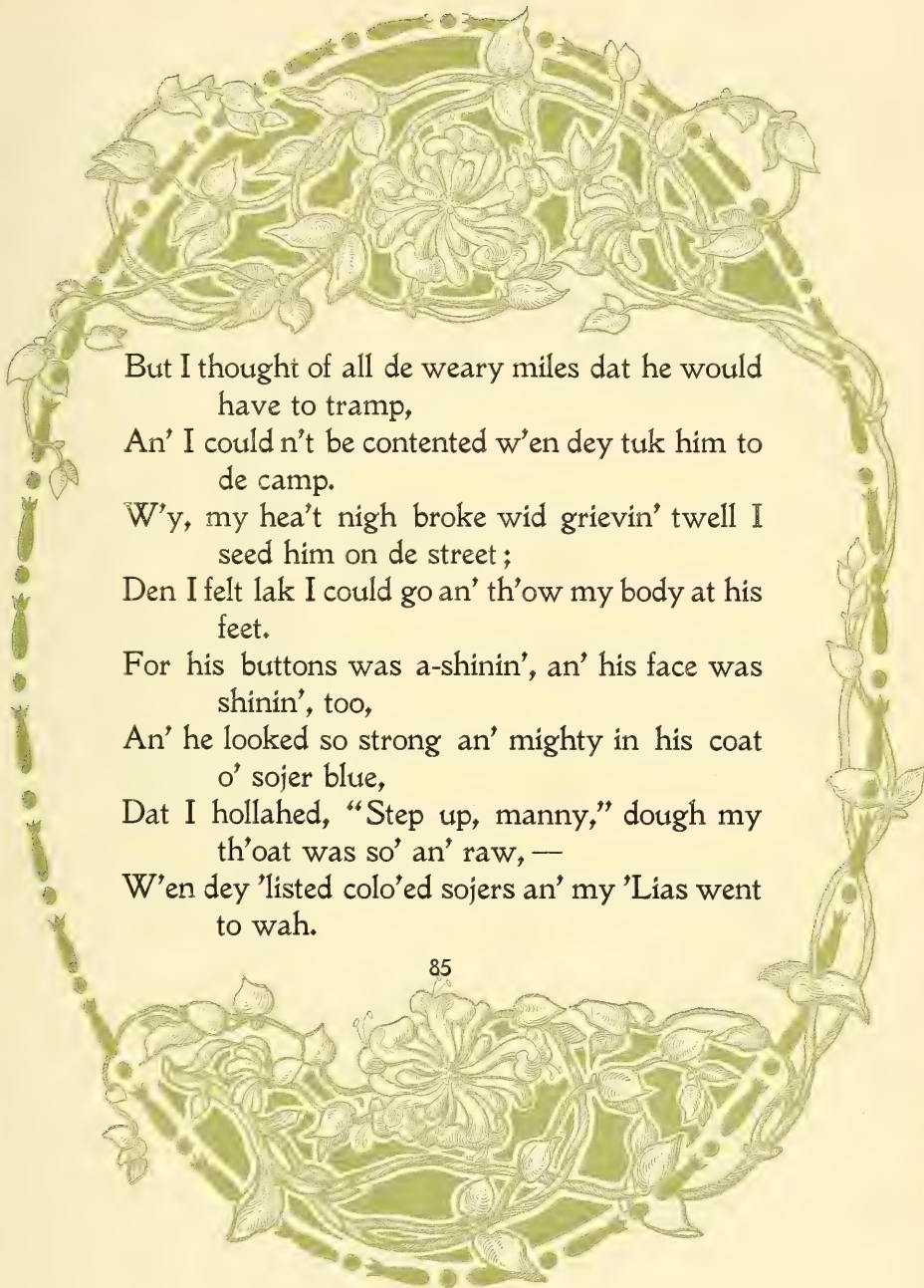




Oh, I hugged him, an' I kissed him, an' I baiged  
him not to go;  
But he tol' me dat his conscience, hit was callin'  
to him so,  
An' he could n't baih to lingah w'en he had a  
chanst to fight  
For de freedom dey had gin him an' de glory of  
de right.  
So he kissed me, an' he lef' me, w'en I 'd p'omised  
to be true;  
An' dey put a knapsack on him, an' a coat all  
colo'ed blue.  
So I gin him pap's ol' Bible, f'om de bottom of de  
draw', —  
W'en dey 'listed colo'ed sojers an' my 'Lias went  
to wah.








But I thought of all de weary miles dat he would  
have to tramp,  
An' I could n't be contented w'en dey tuk him to  
de camp.  
W'y, my hea't nigh broke wid grievin' twell I  
seed him on de street ;  
Den I felt lak I could go an' th'ow my body at his  
feet.  
For his buttons was a-shinin', an' his face was  
shinin', too,  
An' he looked so strong an' mighty in his coat  
o' sojer blue,  
Dat I hollahed, "Step up, manny," dough my  
th'oat was so' an' raw, —  
W'en dey 'listed colo'ed sojers an' my 'Lias went  
to wah.





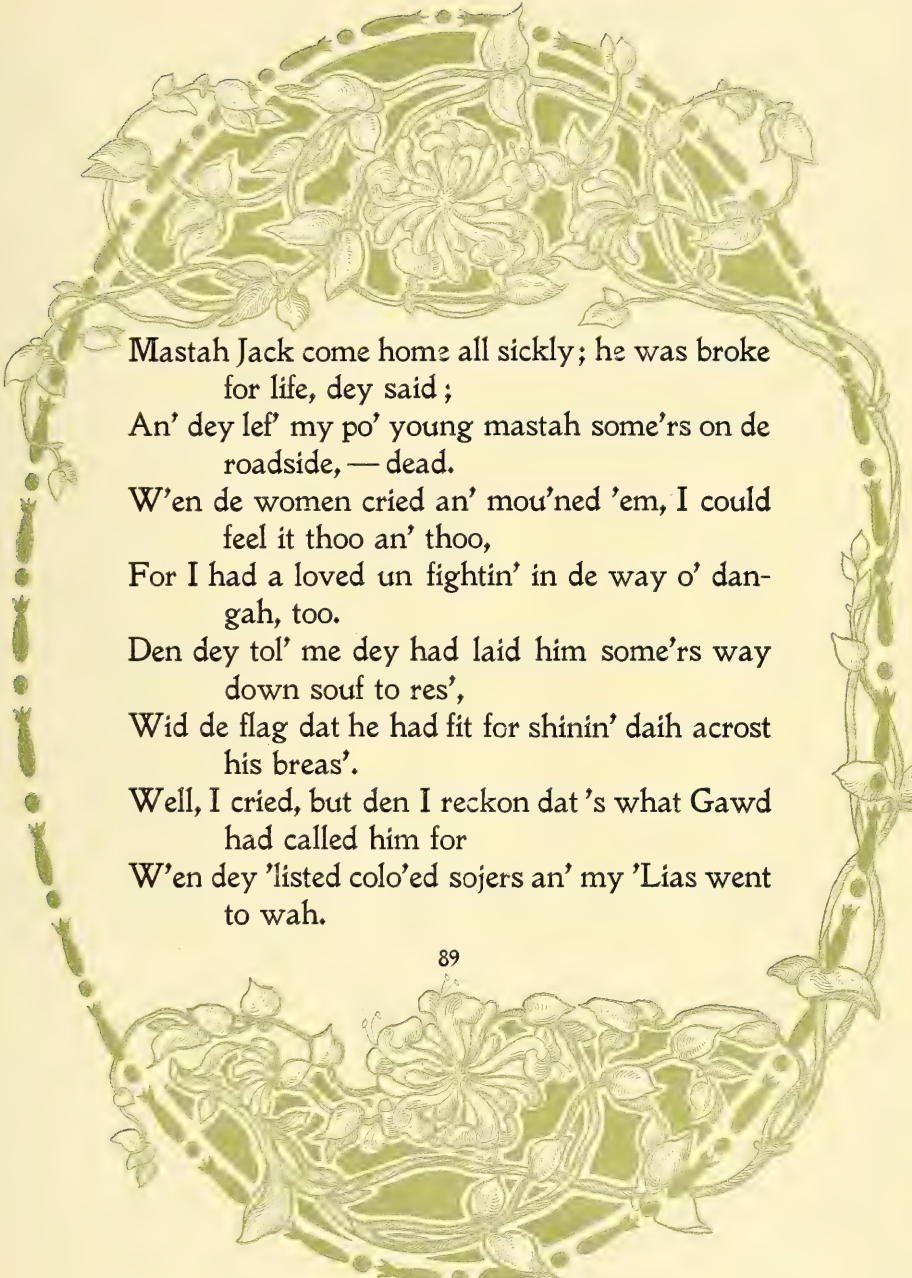


Ol' Mis' cried w'en mastah lef' huh, young Miss  
mou'ned huh brothah Ned,  
An' I did n't know dey feelin's is de ve'y wo'ds  
dey said  
W'en I tol' 'em I was so'y. Dey had done gin  
up dey all;  
But dey only seemed mo' proudah dat dey men  
had heerd de call.  
Bose my mastahs went in gray suits, an' I loved  
de Yankee blue,  
But I t'ought dat I could sorrer for de losin' of  
'em too;  
But I could n't, for I did n't know de ha'f o' whut  
I saw,  
Twell dey 'listed colo'ed sojers an' my 'Lias went  
to wah.









Mastah Jack come home all sickly; he was broke  
for life, dey said ;  
An' dey lef' my po' young mastah some'rs on de  
roadside, — dead.  
W'en de women cried an' mou'ned 'em, I could  
feel it thoo an' thoo,  
For I had a loved un fightin' in de way o' dan-  
gah, too.  
Den dey tol' me dey had laid him some'rs way  
down souf to res',  
Wid de flag dat he had fit for shinin' daih acrost  
his breas'.  
Well, I cried, but den I reckon dat 's what Gawd  
had called him for  
W'en dey 'listed colo'ed sojers an' my 'Lias went  
to wah.





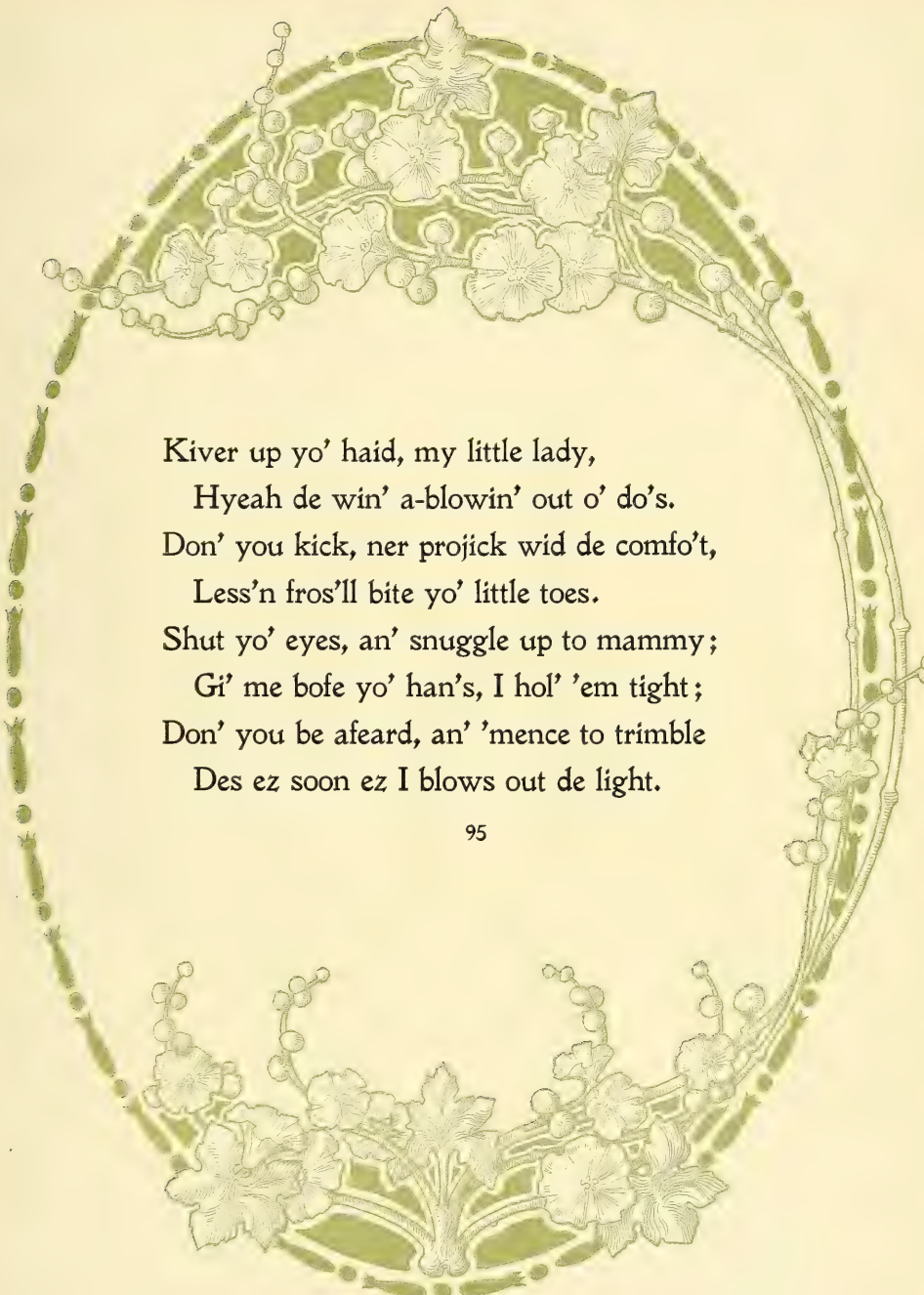






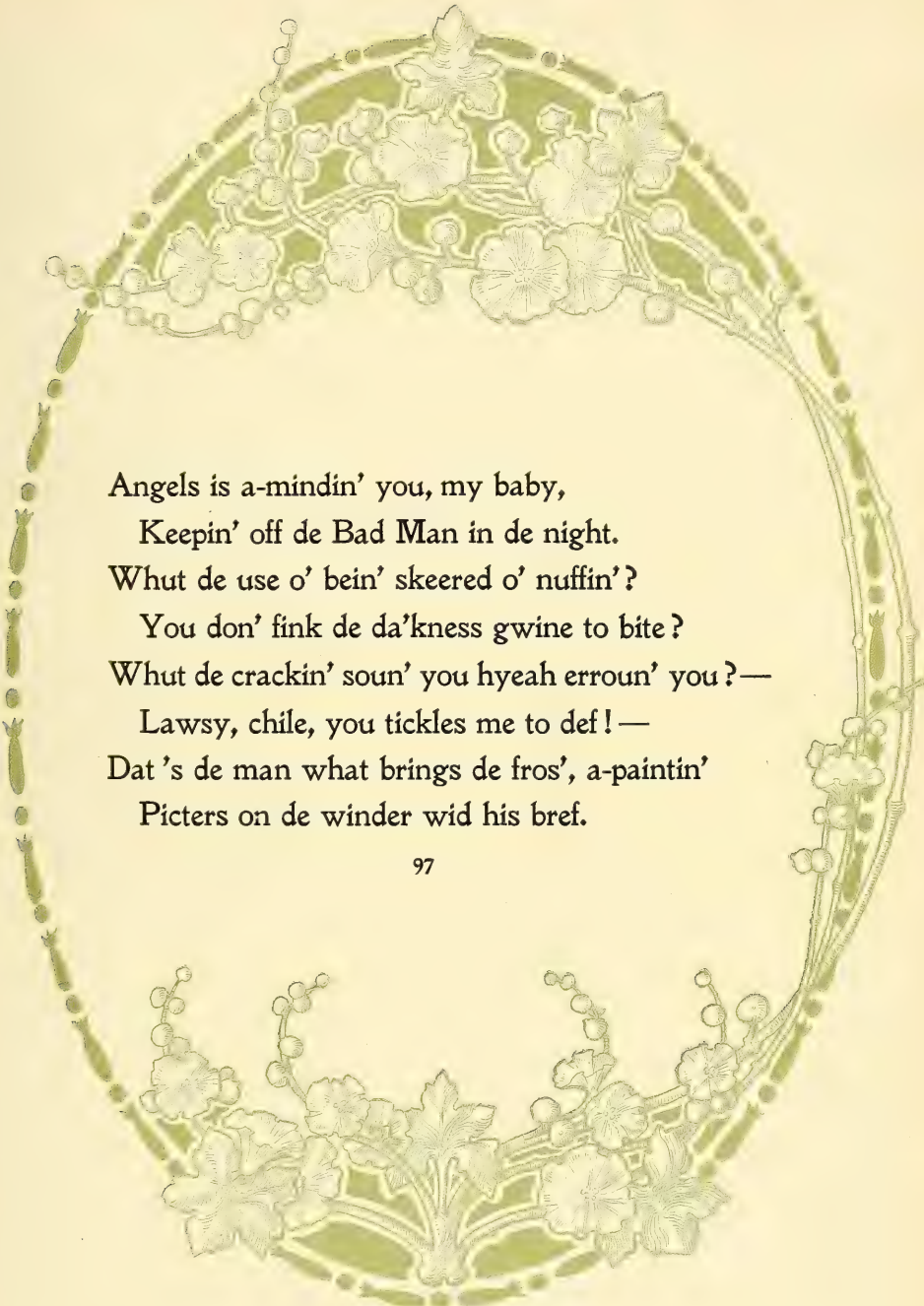






Kiver up yo' haid, my little lady,  
Hyeah de win' a-blowin' out o' do's.  
Don' you kick, ner projick wid de comfo't,  
Less'n fros'll bite yo' little toes.  
Shut yo' eyes, an' snuggle up to mammy;  
Gi' me bofe yo' han's, I hol' 'em tight;  
Don' you be afeard, an' 'mence to trimble  
Des ez soon ez I blows out de light.

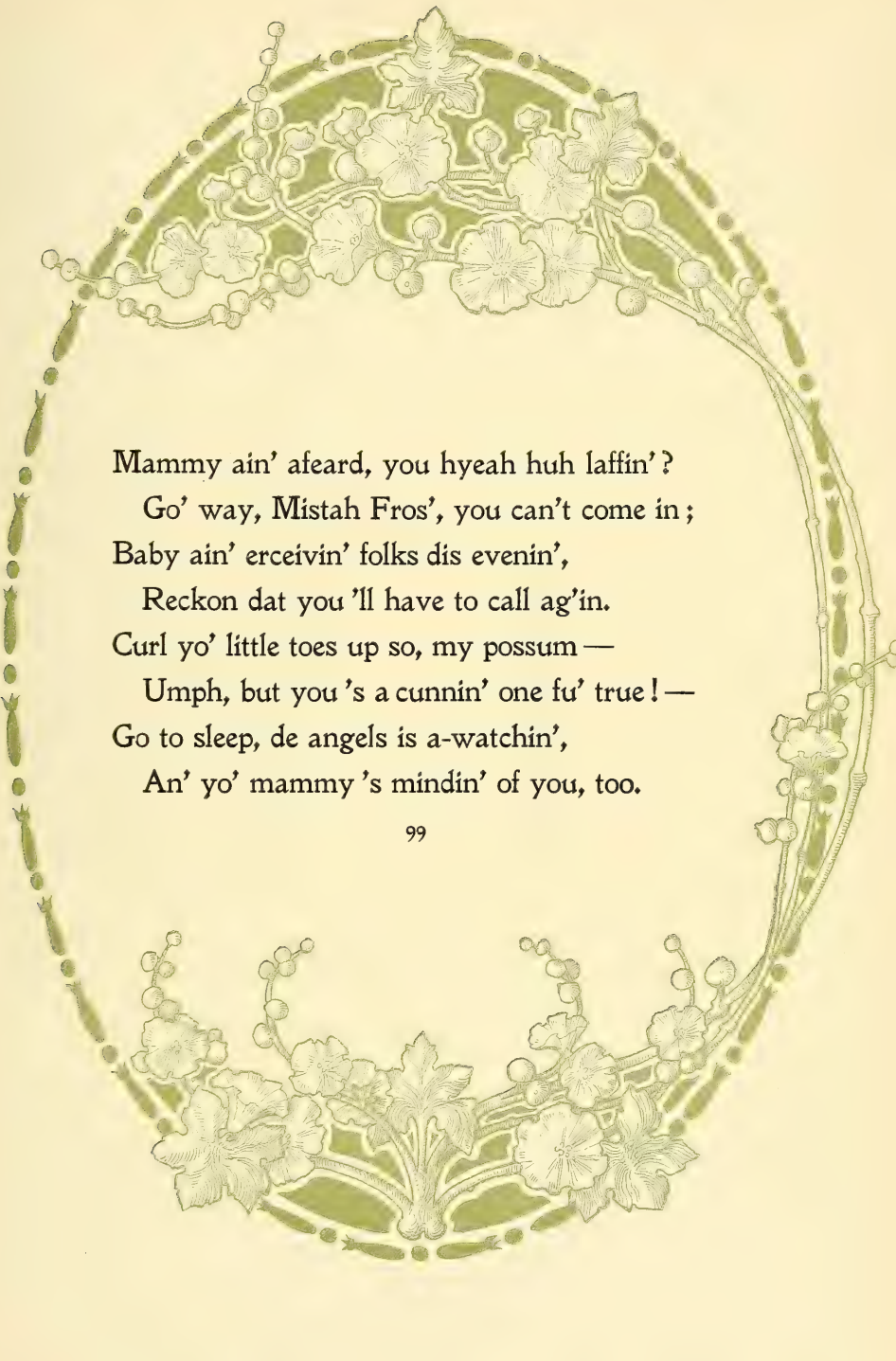




Angels is a-mindin' you, my baby,  
Keepin' off de Bad Man in de night.  
Whut de use o' bein' skeered o' nuffin'?  
You don' fink de da'kness gwine to bite?  
Whut de crackin' soun' you hyeah erroun' you?—  
Lawsy, chile, you tickles me to def!—  
Dat's de man what brings de fros', a-paintin'  
Picters on de winder wid his bref.







Mammy ain' afeard, you hyeah huh laffin'?

Go' way, Mistah Fros', you can't come in;  
Baby ain' erceivin' folks dis evenin',

Reckon dat you 'll have to call ag'in.

Curl yo' little toes up so, my possum —

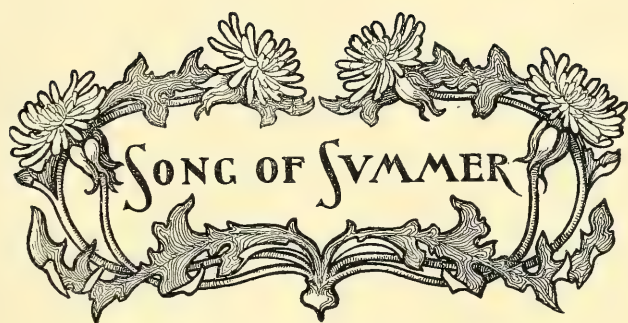
Umph, but you 's a cunnin' one fu' true! —

Go to sleep, de angels is a-watchin',

An' yo' mammy 's mindin' of you, too.


















Dis is gospel weathah, sho' —

Hills is sawt o' hazy.

Meddahs level ez a flo'

Callin' to de lazy.

Sky all white wif streaks o' blue,

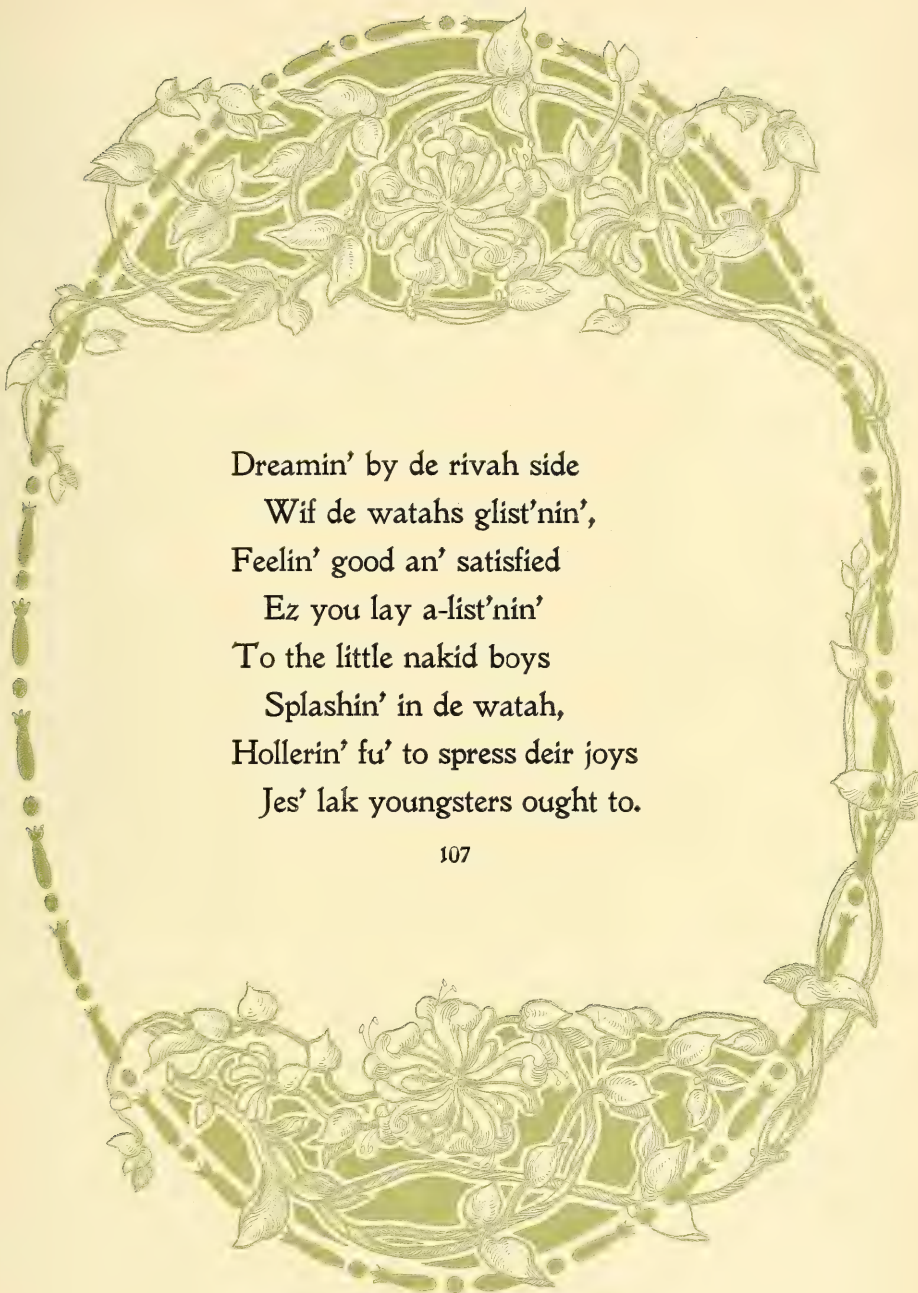
Sunshine softly gleamin',

D'ain't no wuk hit 's right to do,

Nothin' 's right but dreamin'.



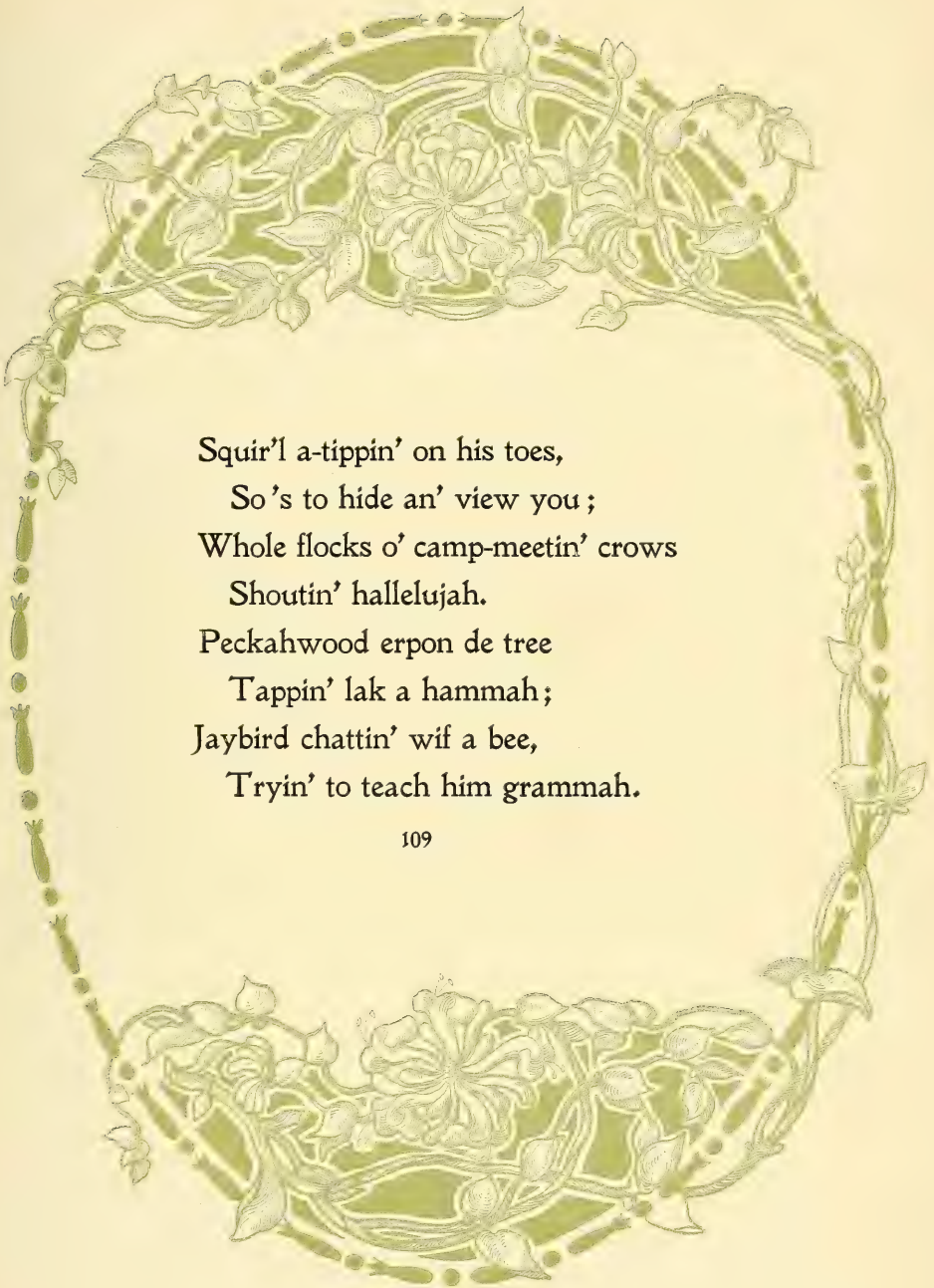




Dreamin' by de rivah side  
Wif de watahs glist'nin',  
Feelin' good an' satisfied  
Ez you lay a-list'nin'  
To the little nakid boys  
Splashin' in de watah,  
Hollerin' fu' to spress deir joys  
Jes' lak youngsters ought to.



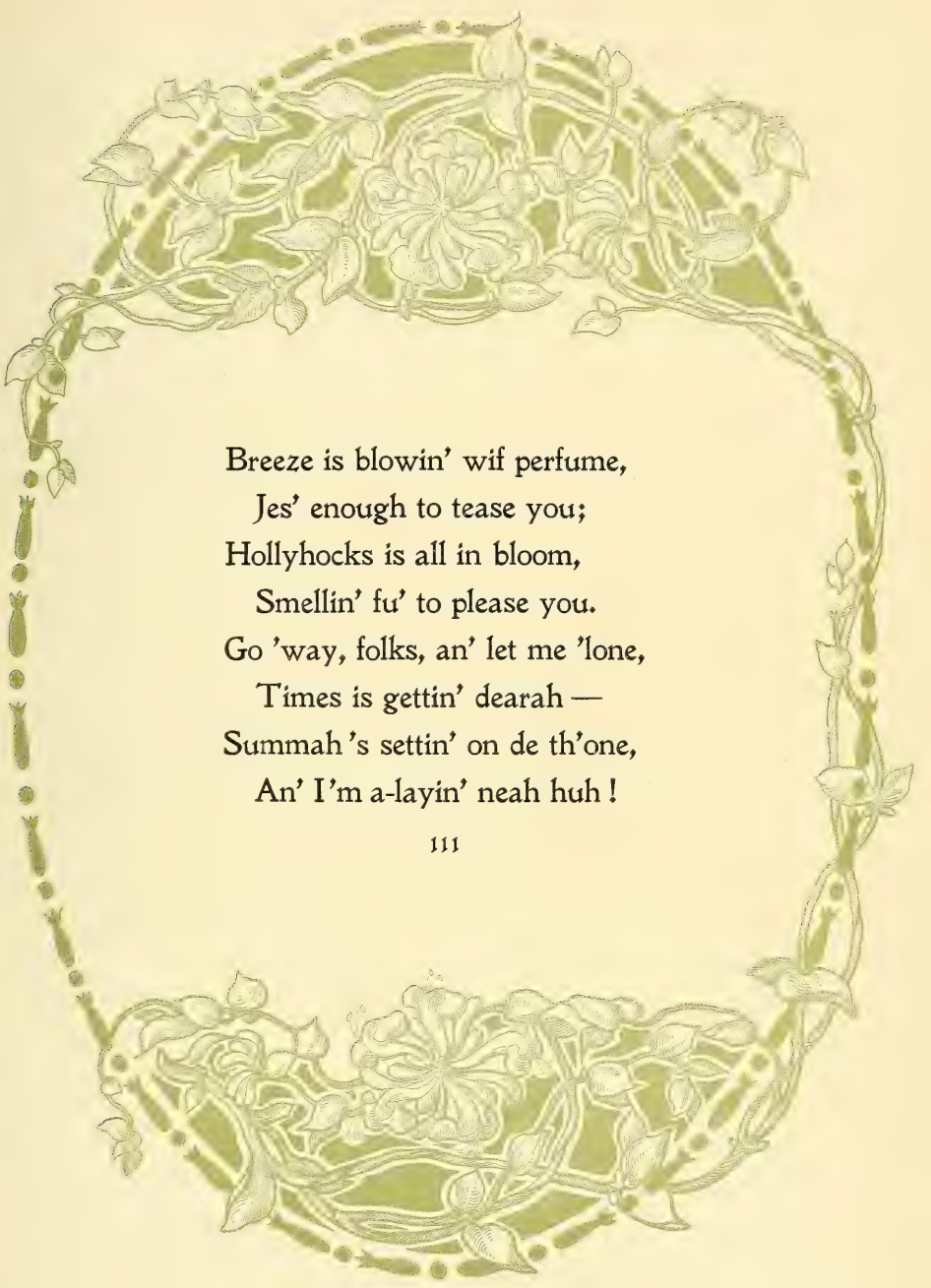




Squir'l a-tippin' on his toes,  
So's to hide an' view you ;  
Whole flocks o' camp-meetin' crows  
Shoutin' hallelujah.  
Peckahwood erpon de tree  
Tappin' lak a hammah ;  
Jaybird chattin' wif a bee,  
Tryin' to teach him grammah.







Breeze is blowin' wif perfume,  
Jes' enough to tease you;  
Hollyhocks is all in bloom,  
Smellin' fu' to please you.  
Go 'way, folks, an' let me 'lone,  
'Times is gettin' dearah —  
Summah 's settin' on de th'one,  
An' I'm a-layin' neah huh !

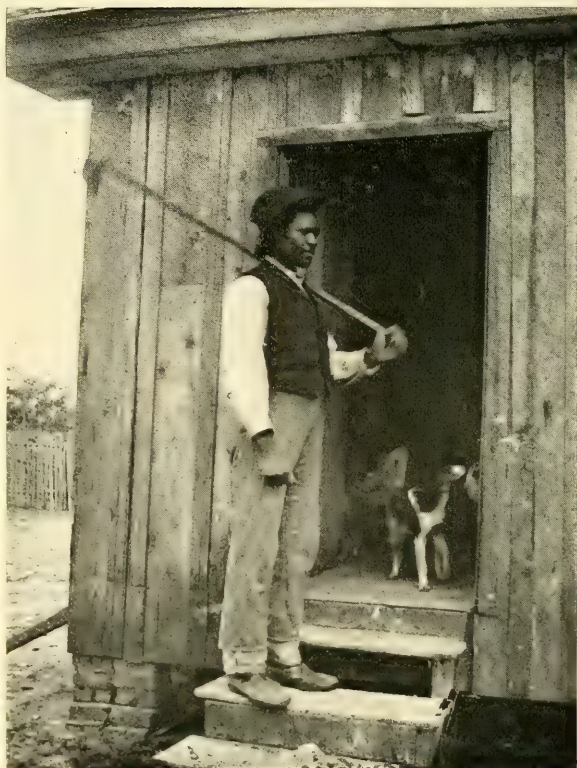




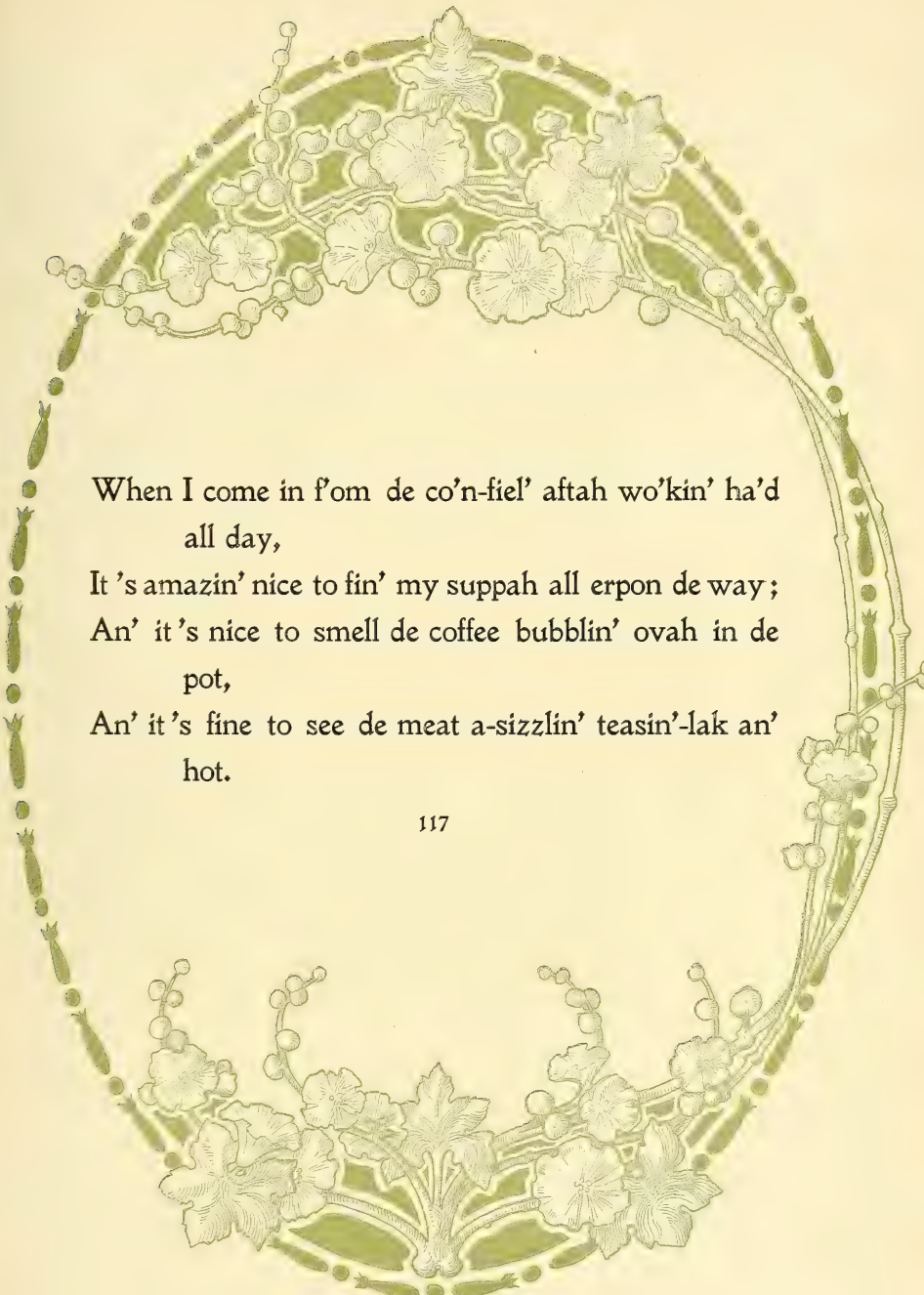




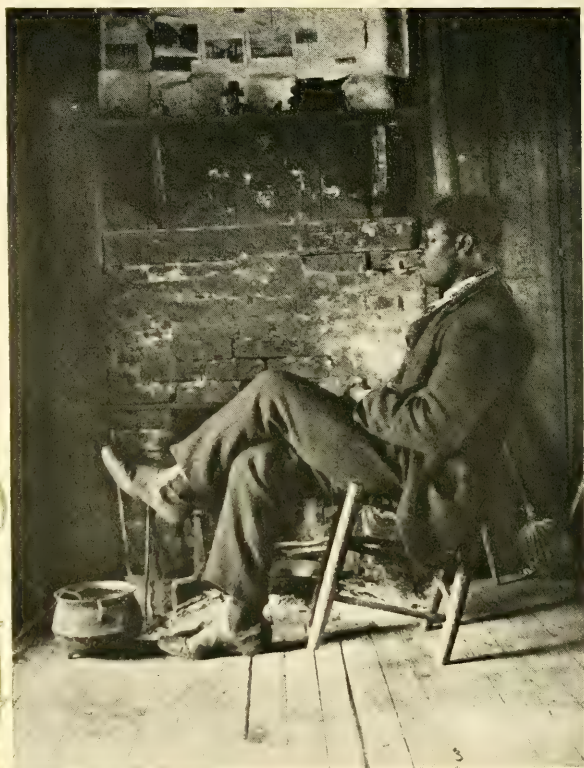


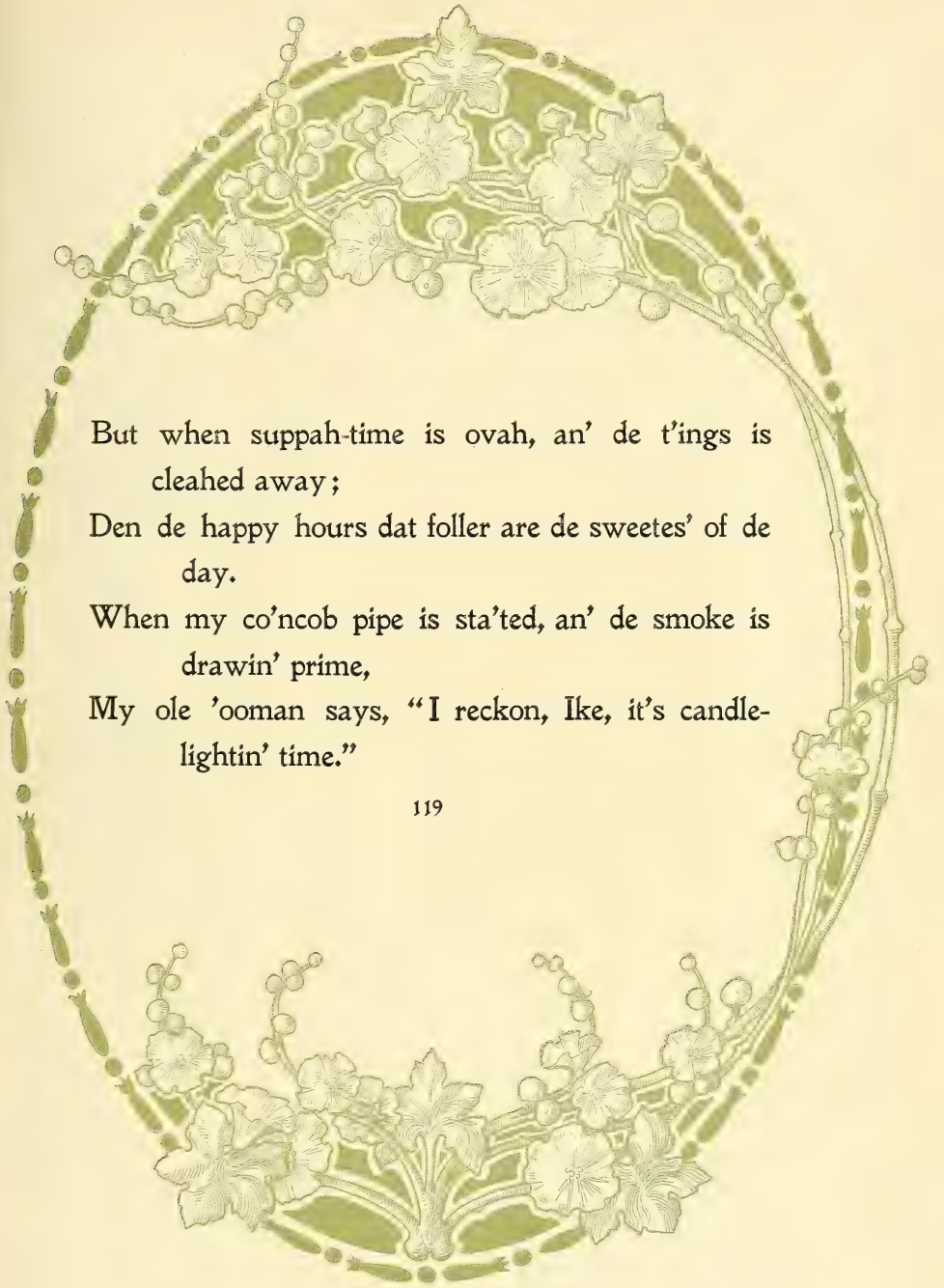






When I come in f'om de co'n-fiel' aftah wo'kin' ha'd  
all day,  
It 's amazin' nice to fin' my suppah all erpon de way ;  
An' it 's nice to smell de coffee bubblin' ovah in de  
pot,  
An' it 's fine to see de meat a-sizzlin' teasin'-lak an'  
hot.





But when suppah-time is ovah, an' de t'ings is  
cleahed away;

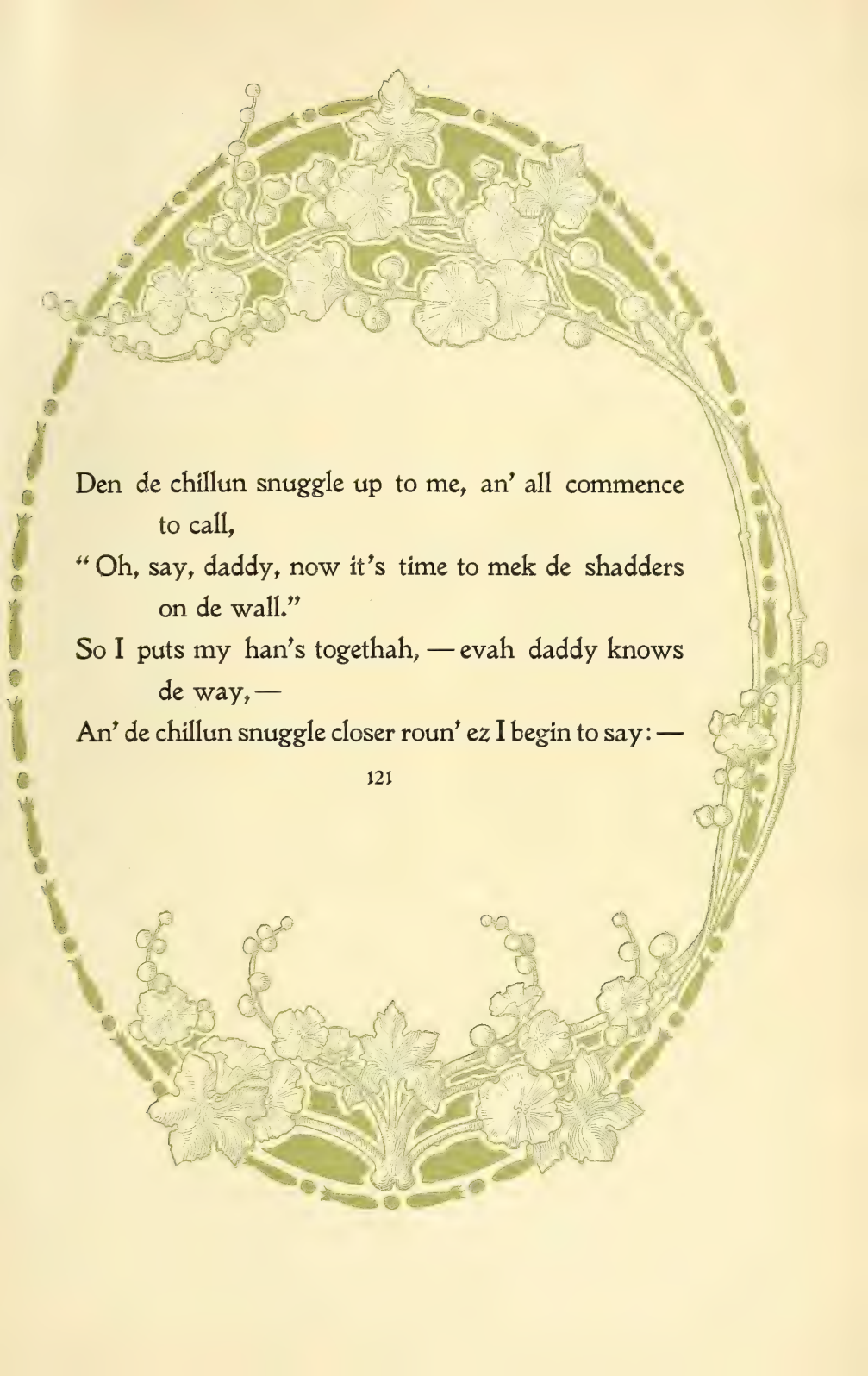
Den de happy hours dat foller are de sweetes' of de  
day.

When my co'ncob pipe is sta'ted, an' de smoke is  
drawin' prime,

My ole 'ooman says, "I reckon, Ike, it's candle-  
lightin' time."







Den de chillun snuggle up to me, an' all commence  
to call,

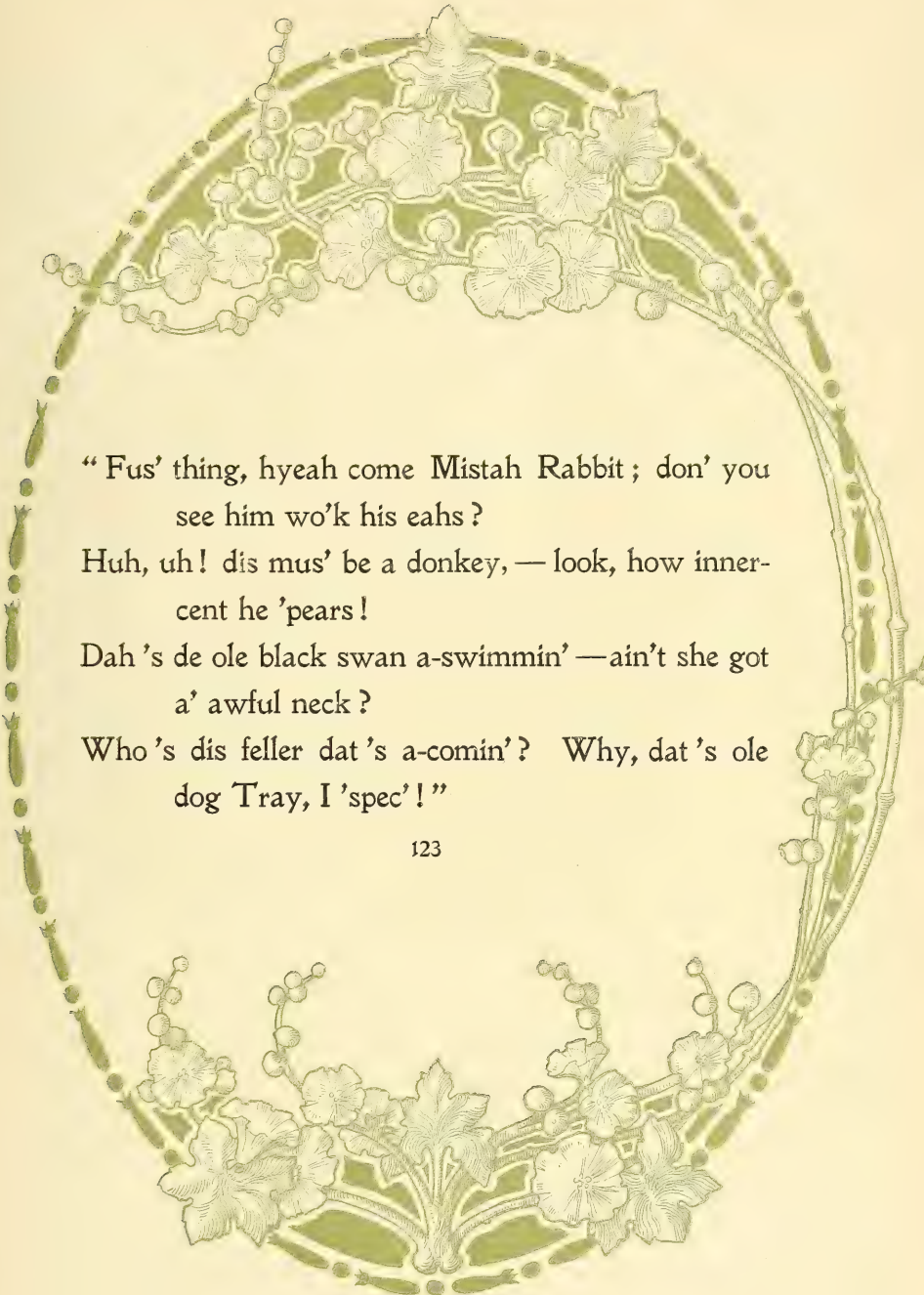
“Oh, say, daddy, now it's time to mek de shadders  
on de wall.”

So I puts my han's togethah, — evah daddy knows  
de way, —

An' de chillun snuggle closer roun' ez I begin to say: —





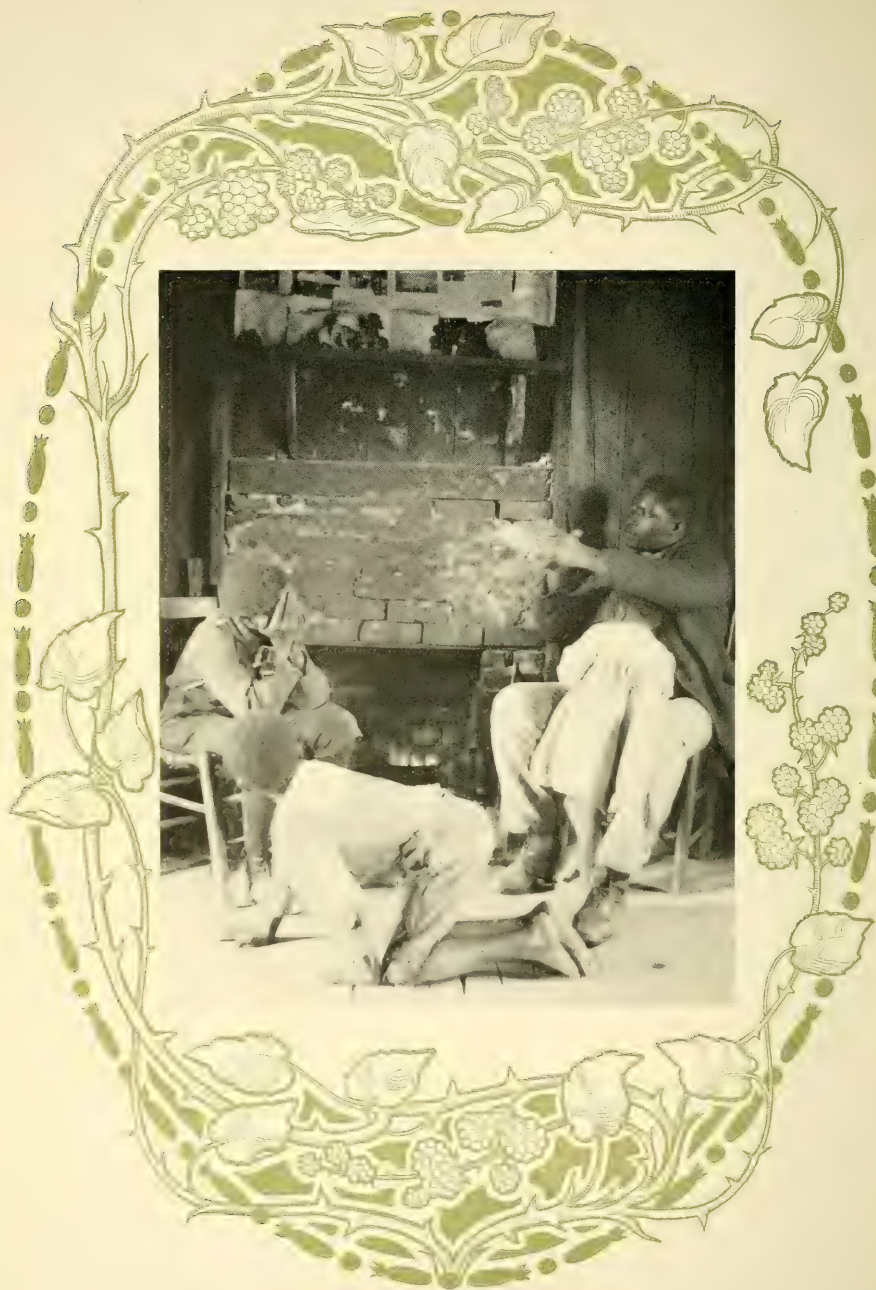


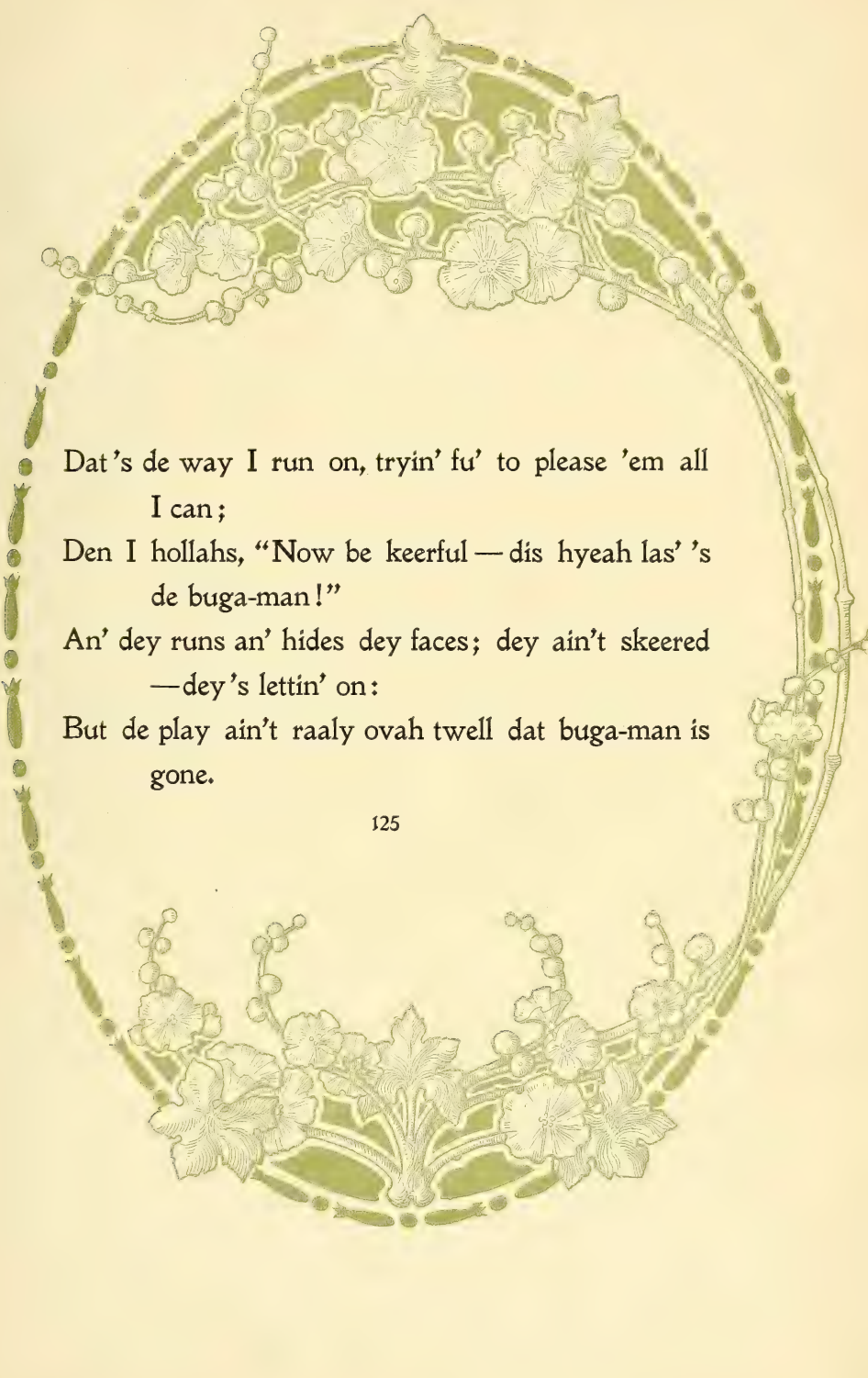
“Fus’ thing, hyeah come Mistah Rabbit; don’ you  
see him wo’k his eahs?

Huh, uh! dis mus’ be a donkey, — look, how inner-  
cent he ’pears!

Dah ’s de ole black swan a-swimmin’ — ain’t she got  
a’ awful neck?

Who’s dis feller dat ’s a-comin’? Why, dat ’s ole  
dog Tray, I ’spec’!”





Dat's de way I run on, tryin' fu' to please 'em all  
I can;

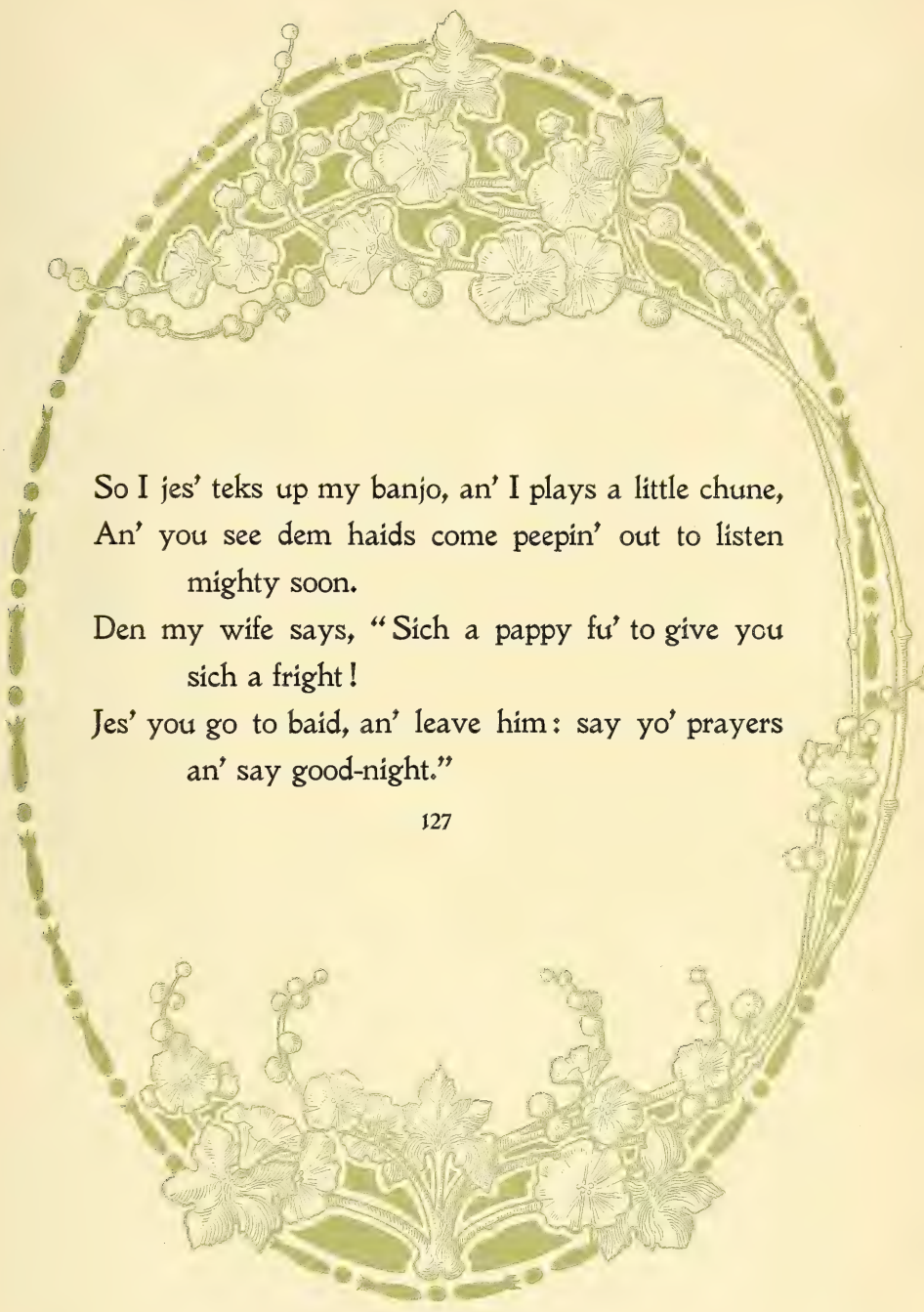
Den I hollahts, "Now be keerful — dis hyeah las' 's  
de buga-man!"

An' dey runs an' hides dey faces; dey ain't skeered  
—dey's lettin' on:

But de play ain't raaly ovah twell dat buga-man is  
gone.







So I jes' teks up my banjo, an' I plays a little chune,  
An' you see dem haids come peepin' out to listen  
mighty soon.

Den my wife says, "Sich a pappy fu' to give you  
sich a fright!

Jes' you go to baid, an' leave him: say yo' prayers  
an' say good-night."







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Candle-lightin' time,